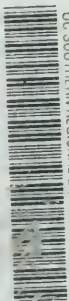
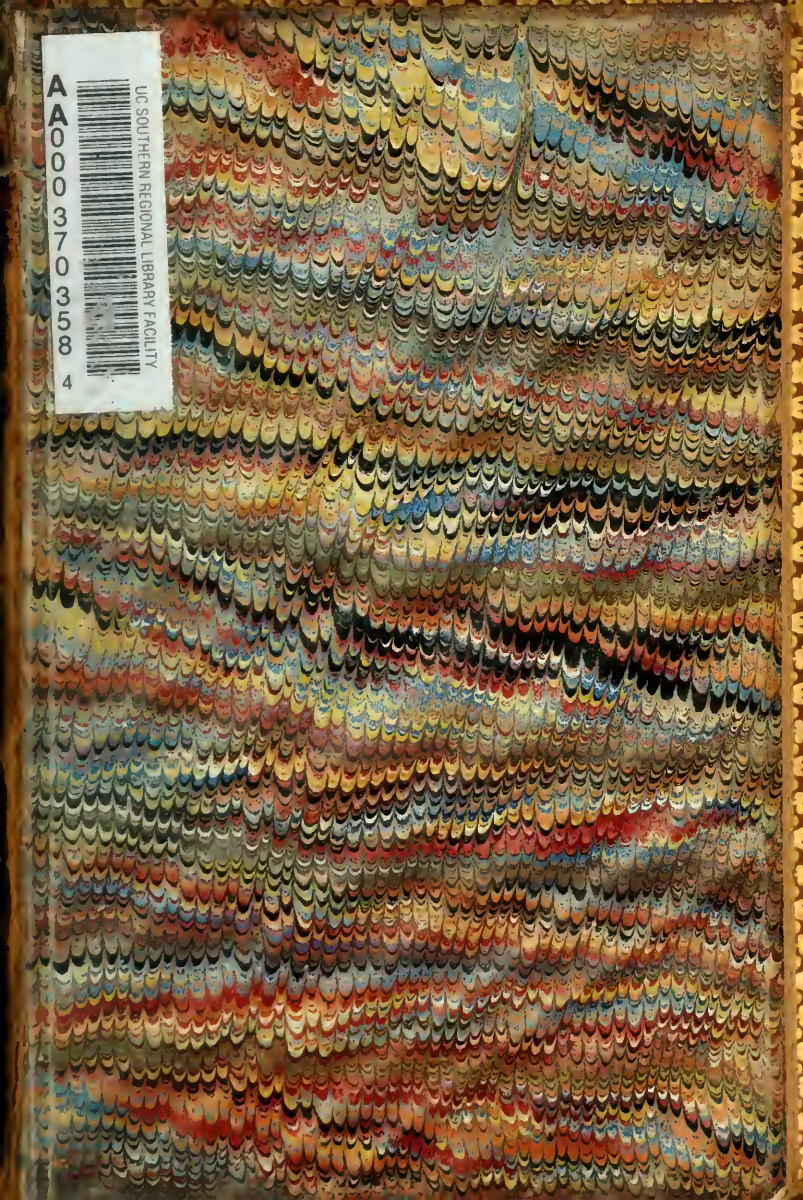


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P O E M S.

BY

EMMELINE HINXMAN.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS.

1857.



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- P O E M S.



WHERE'ER thy fields of pleasure lie,
Where'er thy lot of labour fall,
Raise thou an altar in the midst,
And offer there a sheaf of all.

For now, since once the Lamb has died
Whose Blood doth sprinkle every shrine,
Our "common things" may there be laid,
All hallowed unto use Divine.

The humblest fruit our patient toil
Has tempted from the unwilling sod,
The flowers that deck a passing hour,
A thankful heart may bring to God.

- THE WRAITH.

FOUR maidens on a summer Saturday
Went up the hill against whose pleasant green
The grey roofs of the village street reclined.
The air was sweet that met them, yet it lacked
The wonted hilly freshness,—and the girls
Sauntered and sat, and plucked with idle hands
Late roses here, a single raspberry there,
Where straggling brushwood clothed a ledge of
rock ;

And, loitering thus, marked not that one dull hue
Had grown o'er all the heavens, until they heard
The muttering thunder close them round, and felt
Large drops fall ominous on hand and brow.

How dreary were the uplands now, that late

Seemed so familiar ! and how far away
The village, hidden by the winding gorge,
When peal and bolt were in the homeward path !
But near at hand a covert lay, well known :
Two rocks, together leaning, made a cave,
Where oft, by storm surprised, the sportsman sat,
Or herdsmen harboured thro' a day of rain.
Thither the maidens sped, and nestled down
A fluttering covey, while the tempest broke ;
The lightning from its rolling darkness slid,
The thunders leapt from its continuous roar ;
A roar of struggling winds and clouds above,—
Of rushing rains upon the further peaks,—
Of waters maddened at their secret source,—
And of what other powers unknown to man,
Nature in these her inmost haunts may work
When the hour of strength is on her.

But awhile

And the great tumult dwindled : weak and few
The flashes fell, the tempest lifted up

His skirts from off the shoulders of the hills,
And muttering hied him westward—rain he left,
And tattered clouds, but bore his terrors far.

And now the tongues were loosed again, and made
A swift and merry music thro' the cave.
Light thoughts flew downward to the valley-home,
And led up many a theme for careless talk
Of work and play, of little joys and cares,
Of coming christ'nings, marriages, or wakes.
At last blithe Agnes spake, the frankest she,
And, though the eldest, gayest of the group.

“Come, we are here, four maidens and fast friends,
With none at hand to catch our secrets up
Except the straggling sheep or lonely crow ;
So let us each to each confess the name
We hold the dearest and would make our own.”
There was a silence ; Agnes urged again :
Then little Barbara lifted up her face—
A blushing face, as child-like as 't was sweet,
And whispered, “Nay then, Agnes, 't is for thee

To speak the first." And Agnes laughed anew,
And full on Barbara fixed her merry eyes.

"And whose then should I choose? need ye to ask?
Search all the village through, whom will ye find
To match young Duncan, bonnie Duncan Roy?
Whom should I choose but Duncan?" Barbara's
word

Shot like a swallow's wing athwart her speech—
"He does not love thee."—"Does he not, in sooth?
And wherefore no? How was it that I wore
Those dappled pinks last week? and who was that
But yester-evening hanging on our gate?"
"O, Agnes, this is cruel!" Barbara cried,
With tears in eye and voice, "you that can tell
So many wooers! there's not one, I know,
But would be blithe to win you if he might,
And now you steal my only one, my own,
He that has sworn he loves me. Go your ways,
Can you not go your ways, and leave me him?"
Then Agnes laughed more gaily than before,

But Lois, whose grey eyes were calm and clear
As the early summer morning, and her voice
As mellow as a church-bell touched by chance,
Turned round the pleading face to meet her own.
“Nay, sister mine,” she said, “and would you
keep

A heart that cannot hold its faith except
Another choose to let it be? Nay fie!
This Duncan woes whoever lists to hear:
Me once he told, if I were only kind,
There’s not a face in all the valley round
That he would care to look on.” Barbara’s eyes
Grew large with wonder, Agnes still laughed on:
“Well, be it so, he is a town-bred youth,
And we must judge him tenderly; he learnt
These fashions ere he came among our hills.”
But Lois said, “Nor town, nor country, breed,
Perforce, a cold heart and a double tongue;
This man has both; I saw it in his eyes
When first I met them.”

Barbara hung her head,
Shamefaced and daunted like a chidden child,
But careless Agnes bent her bow again,
This time at Marian aiming her light shafts.
Now Marian was the fairest of them all,
A wealth of beauty with her years had grown,
So that the passing stranger, whensoever
He met the dark, sweet eyes, and perfect face,
Looked back, and wished her valley was his
home.

Leaning against the rocky wall she sat,
Her plaid about her drawn, and Agnes stopped
Her ready jest midway, for all the three
Were suddenly aware how Marian's face
Against the dusky stone looked wild and white,
And ringed with purple, ghastly broad her eyes.
They looked in silence, pitying and amazed ;
But ere the troubled sense could frame a word,
A flash of lightning, like a springing snake,
Shot thro' the cave, and drank its twilight up,

The thunder crashed upon the quivering rocks,
And tossed its angry echoes on and on,
Then, in the breathless pause their lulling left,
Silent and swift a figure passed the cave,
The shape of Duncan Roy.

No other peal

Disturbed the settling elements ; afar
The bleat of flocks came clearly thro' the air,
And from the bowers below, the linnet's trill,
The cushat's tender moan, came sweetly up,
Heard through the single tone of rushing streams.

A pleasant sight it is to see the sun
Win back his old possessions on the heights
Behind the yielding storm ; when far blue peaks
Steal softly into sight, from penance freed,
And down the bosoms of the nearer hills
The emerald brightness grows. Nor would, that day,
A gazer's eye have deemed the picture marred
By those four figures winding down the slope, —

The sunshine glinting on the burnished heads,
While round the naked feet, from many a pool,
And many a swelling tuft of coloured moss,
The glittering spray flew up. Yet low of cheer,
These figures, clad with outward brightness,
moved.

Agnes and Barbara first. In under tones
They spoke together, with compunctious hearts.
And fearing, what, they knew not. "How we
talked !

How foolishly, how idly," whispered one :
"Alas, what ails poor Marian ! didst thou know
She loved him, Agnes ? how much more than
we !"

And Agnes said, "O do not talk of love,
We never loved him ! what I said but now
Was all a jest, or, if you will, a lie,
A wicked lie ; I never loved but one,
My own true sailor Alick, and the rest
Was only sport to while the weary time.

Pray Heaven that I be wiser from to-day !”
More slowly came the second pair. Her arm
Round Marian’s waist had silent Lois wound,
And the firm hand that clasped her side could
 feel
The wild, unequal fluttering heart within.

Between the village and the mountain-path
A turf-grown ledge, smooth as a garden-lawn,
Lay, governed by one solitary Pine,
And, whether o’er the eastward heights he peered,
Or slanted through the golden westward vale,
Its solemn purple frowned against the sun,
And threw a wedge of shadow o’er the grass ;
And whether north or south the wandering wind
Came through the gorge, among its muffling
 boughs

They stopped imprisoned, leaving all below
In breathless calm, and filling, night and day,
Those gloomy labyrinths with unquiet sound.

Through years untold, yet vigorous to his core,
This sentry of the mountain-path had stood,
Honoured of all the dwellers in the vale,
And seen by many a sailor in his dreams,
And many a pale mechanic, when in sleep
He trod again his childhood's pastoral haunts.

How strange the sight then, as the maidens
turned

The pathway's sudden curve, which met their
eyes !

For, parted at his crest, the giant now
Trailed earthwards on each side his sky-nurst
plumes,

The splinters in the sun stared ghastly bright,
And downwards coiling from that cloven top
The death-stripe coursed the stem.

It coursed the stem,
And where it should have sheathed in senseless
earth

Its sated blade, a figure lay—a face

Turned blankly to the sky ;—the shadow this,
Or this the substance, of that form and face
That fled by the mountain-cave erewhile ?
Oh, Marian knows ! and with a shriek that sends
A thousand frantic echoes down the gorge,
Falls senseless at its side. Adown the vale
With sobs and cries the maidens fly aghast,
Save Lois ; by the guilty dead she sits,
And props with tender care against her knee
The wretched mourner, lifting up meantime
Through the dark boughs her limpid eyes to
Heaven,
Between whose brightness and their trustful look
No cloud has ever come ; so Lois stays,
And seems an angel lighted down beneath
Those dreadful shades for pitying ministry,
Fearless, because so pure. But voices now
Come up the path, now crowds are gathering
round,
Silenced with awe. They lift her helpless charge,

And to its age-long heritage thenceforth,
Of haunting horror, the lone spot is left.

But Lois leaves not Marian's side throughout
That woeful night ; while all the neighbours slept,
She with the aged mother watched her bed ;
They only knew the misery to its depth,
As life ebbed out, and carried with itself
Into the pitying silence of the grave
Another life, on whose unconscious shame
No morning ever dawned. Now all is done,
Smoothed for the sepulchre the lovely clay.
And now the mother in the ingle nook
Sits rocking in her chair, and pours her wail,
But low, beneath her breath, as if she feared
A thousand ears in the still creeping dawn.

“My bairn ! my winsome bairn ! my ruined
bairn !

O, would that bonnie face had been less sweet,
And would those lovesome eyes had been less
bright,

For thou hadst still been fair enough for me.
And, Lois ! O but she was good at heart,
Though sair misled—she was a gentle lamb !
O Lois, woman !—say ye think her saved.
She cried upon her Saviour all the night ;
Ye heard her, how she cried and blamed herself.
Wae 's me, how many a time this summer past
She took her Bible ben, and read and sobbed ;
Wae 's me, and then my heart was glad and
proud :

I thought she was a vessel full of grace !”

And Lois answered, “ Christ is pitiful :
He knew the snare, He saw the bitter grief :
Vessels there are of mercy, as of grace.”

But morning grew, and now the kirk-bell's tone
Swelled down the street, and many feet went by.
Then Lois, moving to the window, saw
Her sister pass with Agnes, hand in hand.
She watched them as with downcast eyes they
came,

Like two scared pigeons, pressing side to side,
But just escaped the ruthless falcon's swoop.
She watched them through the porch, and casting
up
One look of joy amid her falling tears,
Turned to the aged woman's chair again.
There still she rocked, and murmured o'er and o'er,
"She cried upon her Saviour all the night."

Oct. 8. 1854.

THE HALL AND THE COTTAGE.



I KNOW a stately pillared Hall ;
 Around it sweeps the sunny park,
Gay gardens where the fountains fall,
 And walks with beech and cedar dark.

But o'er a humbler scene than these
 One turret looks of the proud pile,
A dingle in the wood it sees,
 From which the Cottage casements smile.

And when some showers of yellow leaves
 November o'er the turf has strown,
The pigeons on the drooping eaves,
 The porch, the garden-pales, are shown.

This turret fronts the glowing west,
It stands from household noise removed,
Its peace, its view of sylvan rest,
The Maiden of the mansion loved.

Here many a happy hour had sped
With books, with pencils—in fair dreams—
In secret works of hand or head—
Youth's bashful, yet ambitious schemes.

Sweet hours ! but oft by adverse call
Disturbed, and therefore held more dear ;
For she, the fairest light of all,
Must 'mid the radiant guests appear. ,

The boat is ready on the lake,
The bows are strung—the palfreys prance ;
Her slender hand the harp must wake,
Her fairy foot must lead the dance.

Gay was she, and such scenes could please,

But, with a fervent mind endued,

She turned in truer love from these

Back to her graceful solitude.

At first she turned in joy serene,

Then hopes delicious there were nurst;

At last she turned that there, unseen,

The storms of agony might burst.

Then, doleful room, what plaintive calls,

What outstretched arms that grasped the air,

Were witnessed by thy silent walls!

Ah, woe! when youth must learn despair.

PART II.

What time she met this utter blight.

It was mid Summer on the earth,

And cruel seemed the golden light,

And full of scorn the thrush's mirth.

Even twilight was too calm, too sweet ;

She could not bear the soft wind's touch ;

She paced the floor with aimless feet ;

She hid her face upon the couch.

But storms have no continuous life ;

The tumult of despair must die ;

A calm succeeds the fruitless strife,

The settling of dead misery.

When now the earlier twilights gloomed,

And Autumn touched the reddenning bower,

Nature had o'er her reassumed

An altered phase of former power.

The breathless mist, the leaf afloat,

The sad, cold yellow in the west,

Faint snatches from the robin's throat,

Were not unanswered in her breast.

Her weary spirit was allowed

A sense of freedom undefined ;

It drifted with the drifting cloud,

It wandered with the evening wind.

And in the shadowy, whispering air

It seemed another voice to know,

And of a presence was aware

That with its own had leave to flow.

So from her window would she lean

Day after day, as twilight grew,

And soon the cottage walls between

The failing foliage came to view.

And as in dreamy mood she gazed,

She marked how oft, her work in hand,

Though blithe within the firelight blazed,

A maiden at the porch would stand ;

And sauntered down the garden walk;
And how a youth was at the stile ;
She seemed to hear the murmured talk,
To see the blush, the happy smile !

Her wasted love that burned within
Rose up in bitter strength at first;
Ah, count it not an envious sin,
The sudden pang, the plaintive burst !

It passed, and though a quiet grief
Would often dim her gazing eyes,
A gradual fountain of relief
Seemed from that daily sight to rise.

Her lonely heart a tissue wove
Of tender wishes round the twain.
She blessed them in their humble love,
She prayed they ne'er might know her pain.

When she took up her evening watch,
Ah, little dreamt the cottage maid,
What eyes were bent with her's to catch
The figure issuing from the shade.

Ah, little,—as the lovers stood,
That window reddening to the west,
And marked its flash in idle mood,—
The blessing murmured thence was guessed !

PART III.

By this the Winter air blew keen,
And rime had touched the naked trees ;
She cannot from her window lean,
She shrinks before the chilling breeze.

What marvel ? when that faded cheek,
That languid eye and motion, show
In course how slackened and how weak
The springs of life within her flow.

Too sad, too common in its truth,—

 Ah, briefly be the tale passed o'er,—

The slow decay of health in youth

 When youthful joy has fled before.

Be from her weary pillow brought

 This single record, sad and sweet,

How oft she visited in thought

 That pair as she had seen them meet.

How, when she heard the North-wind rave,

 Or watched the slowly freezing mist,

She wondered if their love was brave

 To hold through this the wonted tryst :—

“ Or, haply now, that need is o'er ;

 The joy that crowns their own dear hearth

Flings music on the tempest's roar,

 And gives a summer to the earth.

“But what,” she pondered, “if they prove

Such wasted hopes as I have known ?

If poverty and pride our love

In one adversity have thrown ?

“O then be mine no barren grief !

My hand the seed of joy shall cast,

Whose boughs shall spread with flower and leaf

When I and all my woes are past.”

And soon strange tidings of their friend

Came to the pair who worked and loved,

And hoped some day a happy end

Might crown affection duly proved.

And soon do other walls beside

The maiden’s dwelling rise to view ;—

There shall the lover lead his bride,

While yet the coming Spring is new.

PART IV.

The Spring comes smiling on betimes,
As blithe the happy day to crown ;
Red swells the bud upon the limes,
The willow wears her yellow down.

The thrush takes up her evening strain,
O'er ringing fallows mounts the lark,
The primrose stars the village lane
And knolls and hollows of the park.

But sweeter than the sweet Spring air,
And calmer than the calm blue skies,
The hopes that stir the happy Pair,
The light that fills the Lady's eyes.

Within those lucid depths no more
The trembling mist of tears collects ;
The fever of that heart is o'er
That soon a full repose expects.

She views the tract of woe behind,
As travellers dream of once-seen lands,
The undying love within her mind
Calm as a marble statue stands.

But in this hush, a single thought
That holds of earth has leave to stir ;
'Tis with the coming bridal fraught,
The humble bliss built up by her.

The wedding-day draws on apace,
The span of lingering life is brief,—
She turns to those her pleading eyes
Who tend her in remorseful grief ;

And prays, whate'er befall meantime,
That still *that* joy have no delay—
“O let,” she cried, “their wedding-chime
Ring, if so be, my soul away !

“ Or let it, as I fain would choose,
Take up the echoes of my knell,
That ere my grave be closed, the news
May o’er the listening churchyard swell.”

PART V.

The Hall is crowded as of yore,
From other lips is heard the song,
Bright faces come and go before
The window whence she gazed so long.

Whatever silent memories last,
The clouds she watched, the withered leaf,
Seem not more swept into the past
Than that short phase of life and grief.

Yet traces are there which survive :
There is a hearth, a household band,
Where sweet affections grow and thrive,
The fairer for the planter’s hand.

And in the churchyard lies a mound

Thick with the violets of the Spring,

Wherein a holier sleep is found,

And whence shall spread a brighter wing ;

Because, although one early blow

Its tender fibres could destroy,

The heart within could make its woe

The well-spring of another's joy.

Nov. 23. 1850.

THE POET'S ADVENTURE.



It was in that choice hour of summer days *

When Earth begins towards quiet to incline,
When sunshine mellows, and makes golden haze
Through which the oak tree's bole and red-
limbed pine
Show larger than the truth, but when the shadows
Not yet have stretched, nor dews have touched
the meadows.

I, lying by an ample stream that swept
Through forest privacies for many a mile,
With eyelids closed, but with a heart that kept
A waking consciousness of joy the while,
Anon heard sounds of music, which the river
Did in wild fragments to mine ear deliver.

Then much I marvelled who or what were they
From the unused echoes drew so sweet reply ;
Whether a troop of dames and gallants gay
Anon should in their painted barge glide by,
Or whether gifted shepherd at his leisure
Piped on his reeds a quaint and mournful measure.

But soon I was aware that never rose
From voice or hollow flute so wild a strain,
Nor yet from chords—or saving only those
That utter to the wind their wayward pain.
Like them I heard this music swell and languish,
And shudder with a strange harmonious anguish.

Now with the winding stream it wound along,
The air was all with one calm murmur filled ;
Lo ! now upshot the treble fierce and strong,
And through the forest like sharp arrows
thrilled ;

Now drop by drop fell, aimless, without power,
The weary notes, like chimes from an old tower.

Quick throbbings took my heart : entranced I lay
In passive wonder and in sad delight ;
While to mine eyes unconscious tears made way
And dimmed them : so that moving shape, snow-
white,
Which up the river they ere long discovered,
Seemed like a cloud that o'er its bosom hovered.

But it drew onwards, slowly it drew on,
Between the woods, midway upon the stream,
“ Self-gathered,” conscious, calm ;—a radiant swan,
Her music floating with her like a dream :—
She passed, the shades with her white presence
cleaving,
And in her wake a silver ripple leaving.

A deer that on the sedgy margin stood,
Leaning to drink, drew backwards solemnly ;

A dove that had been murmuring to her brood

Some cradle-music, hushed the lullaby :

Such reverence as men pay to things of heaven

Was by these creatures to her passing given.

But as a spell the marvel seemed to strike

My senses, and all movement to restrain

Till she was gone : then up I rose, and, like

A mourner following in her funeral train,

Moved after : she, meantime, unconscious gliding,

To groves and waters her sad news confiding.

And in my heart I said, "O thou, Death-dowered,

Death-taught ! what impulse makes this music's
soul ?

What sharp regrets in those quick notes are
showered ?

What pangs or triumphs through that loud
torrent roll ?

What passions in thy smooth white bosom riot

Which seems a dedicated shrine of quiet ?

“O art thou in thy song a mockery

“To thy sad self, while yet the spell must flow ?

Or art thou with thy doom content to buy

This gift of glory ? or dost thou bestow

A grateful offering, choicest of her treasures,

On listening Nature, whence thou drew'st thy
pleasures ?

“What sense within thee rose ? what voice came
to thee

Whilst thou wast with thy milk-white peers
at play ?

What mandate with a lightning strength shot
through thee,

Bidding thee from their joyaunce drop away ?”

So, as I gently followed, did I ponder

On the sadness, and the sweetness, and the wonder.

But now the woods were left, and forth we came

Where the bright gorse exhaled its dainty
breath ;

Between two pointed hills the sunset's flame

Had leave to dwell, and slanted o'er the heath,
A tender crimson flushed the river's bosom,
Oft starred by image of the golden blossom.

Here wreathed the quiet music through the air,

And hung upon it like a Summer mist ; —

But now the plain gave way to meadows fair,

And now the stream by willow sprays was kissed ;
The chequered banks revealed the hand of tillage,
And shone, not far, the casements of a village.

Now broke the sound of instrument and song

On that sad creature's dirge ; but she serene
Still kept her way, and came upon a throng

Of youths and maidens dancing o'er a green ;
Not lambs, not swallows mad with whirling
pleasure

Than these more gleesome in their giddy measure.

When they beheld that vision, suddenly

The music paused, and broke the startled ring,

Scattered in gazing groups till it went by.

But to those hearts the sober mood could cling
Not long ; soon turned they to their sports and
laughter,

One deep-eyed maid alone looked sadly after.

Her eyes awhile, but still my constant feet,

Pursued my pale enchantress ; while the strain
That had been floating forth serenely sweet,

Now rushed on ringing notes of rage or pain,
As though that dying heart was stung to madness
By glimpse of life, and love, and youthful gladness.

And ere again had sunk her passion's blast,

Fields were behind us left, and haunts of men ;
By holt, and heath, and bare green hill we passed
Into sad shadows of a rocky glen.

The stream foreknew the battle yet untasted,
And like a courser to the onset hasted.

And now it rushed between its narrow banks,
Whirled in black eddies, fell in foaming sheet ;
The oak and birch clomb down the slimy flanks
Of the echoing rocks, midway in air to meet ;
A heavy odour hung among their bowers,
Like the drenched forests after August showers.

As one who leaning from a sea-girt rock
To watch the storm-vest bark upon her way,
Now sliding down smooth gulphs, now in the shock
Of meeting breakers caught, and hid in spray,
Holds at each plunge his breath suspended, fearing
To see no more the white sail re-appearing,—

So hung I o'er the waters which tossed on
That failing life with foam and fierce rebound,
While from the whirlpools ever and anon
A sharp note pierced their hoarse eternal sound ;
So shoots a cry, the sullen tempest rending,
From the lost bark, through cloven seas descending.

But she, unharmed and undisturbed, came forth
To calmer regions : now in shallows wide
The torrent spread, outwearied with its wrath,
The smooth red steep receded on each side,
And fragments, by some ancient tempest shattered,
Lay in the dimpling waters idly scattered.

By this, the moon bent her pale brow in heaven,
And wavered over head the Milky Zone,
Westward, a faint light hung, where Day had striven
Long with encroaching Night, and lay o'er-
thrown ;
And swelling on the wind's uncertain motion,
Was heard the murmur of the distant Ocean.

More solemn and more sweet the music grew,
And laid a deeper spell on heart and ear ;
A vague distress through all my senses flew,
My pulses quickened with a nameless fear ;—
Now oft by pause and sob the strain was broken,
My pausing heart kept measure with each token.

And now the path ran through untrodden brakes,
Old stems before me leant, and herbage rank
Perplexed me — burdocks, and lithe briars like
snakes,
While crumbled underneath the treacherous
bank.

Strange were all things about me, — strange and
dreary,
And I by strange fears vexed, amazed and weary.

And then I was aware of Nature's law :

How from bold eyes her mysteries are hidden, —
How by this toilsome pathway, and this awe
Had she, displeased, my prying steps forbidden,
Veiling the secret of her stricken daughter
From all but midnight and the plaintive water.

I turned, rebuked, and as in distance died

The enchanting sounds, I mused upon the end ;—
If she, washed down upon the ebbing tide,
Gave her last cadence with its voice to blend,

Then like a fair weed, prone upon the surges,
Was tossed, unconseious of their rude, hoarse
dirges.

But rather I believed, ere yet those seas
Were reached, for her the curving margin gave
A peaceful cove, where drooped the willow trees,
And round the lily's leaf the weltering wave
Lisp'd of repose ; there did one low note sever
The tremulous chord—there anchored she for ever.

March 14. 1850.

THE GARDEN OF REVERIE.



Look downward o'er that tangled bank,

Thou shalt behold a mournful scene,

The triumph of a ruin rank

Where hands of art and care have been :

Ruin by tender charm ungraced,

A shapeless, stagnant over-growth,

Where Nature on her own wild waste

Lies in dull luxury of sloth.

Here, where the breezes rustle by,—

Here, where the cheerful sunbeams play,—

Sit down, and learn the history

Of that lone Garden's palmy day.

No gleam did e'er its shades rejoice
From silken robe or brilliant flowers,
It echoed not to Pleasure's voice,
Nor took gay gifts from Summer hours :
Yet royal eyes, with nicest choice,
Had ordered all its walks and bowers,
Had grouped the laurels, taught the pine
And ilex where to strike their root,
Where arbutus should dimly shine
With clustered mockeries of fruit,
And where the savine's spicy fan
Upon the velvet turf should sweep ;
Had traced the pathway's mazy plan,
Which round the jutting shrubberies ran
To nooks of shade, as caverns deep,—
Chilly and damp as cavern air,
The cedar closing with the yew ;
Nor sunshine ever slanted there,
Nor ever noon could dry the dew.
And lawn, and path, and dim retreat
Were strange to all exploring feet,

Save of one dreamy, musing man,
Who, high in birth, and rich in mind,
Born to control and lead his kind,
To lesser men the work resigned.
His phantasy this shrine had wrought
These dedicated haunts of Thought,
Where he might bathe his soul at ease
In the still mist of reveries ;
And all that through the outer sense,
The unconscious mind might influence
In brooding shade and mossy lawn,
And odours from the shrubberies drawn,
Whose warm wealth steeped the atmosphere,
As ministers were gathered here.

Within the lawn a narrow well,
With waters cold, and clear, and black,
Did in perpetual shadow dwell, —
It gave the sky no pictures back ;

No golden fish therein did swim,
Nor sportive beetles wheel and glide,
Nor bubbles bead the lowest brim
Of the stone steps that clove its side.
All down the garden's circling steep
The ivy hung her folds of green,
And little springs essayed to creep,
Half stifled, through the matted screen ;
And cheerless, lacking power to cheer,
Grew here and there the pallid flowers,
Sown thinly, and with choice severe,
Meek strangers in the breezeless bowers.
There only might the cistus frail
Her sad imploring eye lift up,
The azalea faint perfumes exhale,
The bleached petunia drop her cup.

Far, far away arose the lark,
Nor oft the cuckoo here would sing,
Because the laurels stiff and dark
Could tell but little of his Spring ;

And here the prince at pleasure nursed
His colourless philosophies,
That never into blossom burst,
So much they lacked the air and skies,—
The air and skies of common life,
Its seasonable work and play,
He deemed the elements of strife,
Coarse food which turned the soul to clay.

But while he walks in dreaming mood,
What meets his wandering eye between
The lighter background of the wood
And the dark ivy's sunless green ?
A flash—a smile—a radiant face,
With glowing cheek and auburn hair,
Hangs o'er the brink of the lone place
As tho' new-lighted from the air !
One moment thro' the gazer sent
The conquering thrill of those bright eyes,
As o'er the verdant depths she bent
A careless look of gay surprise.

She rose,— a maiden-figure fair,
A comely form of buoyant ease ;
The sunshine struck her burnished hair,
Her gay robe fluttered on the breeze.
From one round arm a basket hung,
A sheaf of tools the other bore,
A bugle at her waist was slung,
A bunch of flowers her bosom wore.

“Stay, stay !” he cried, “descend, bright maid !
“Teach rapture to this peaceful shade !”
But while he spoke, she turned away,
Between the stems he saw her wind,
And as she went, her bounding lay
Left its clear syllables behind : —

“Who follows me has health and hope,
Who wins me, joy, and fame, and power ;
His orb shall gain a broader scope,
And like a star benign, shall shower

Glad influence o'er the earth abroad,
And climb to heaven the noblest road."

It ceased ; the ancient slumbrous spell

Again upon the garden pressed ;

But not so soon the sudden swell

Subsided in the Prince's breast,

That thro' its width and depth was stirred,

Obedient as the freshening bay,

When from the open seas is heard

The travelling wind upon its way.

The beauteous face no more appeared ;

But sometimes in the evening hush,

Along the bank the lover heard

A light, determined footstep brush ;

Or when, at noon, the breathless spell

Did deepest on the garden brood,

Her carol, like a silver bell,

Would ring from out the upper wood,—

And livelier breezes woke the copse,
And twinkled in the aspens' tops,
And even the garden's heavy scent
Was with a fresher current blent.
What marvel if such lures constrained
The lover to new feats at last ?
Scaled was the tangled rock, and gained
The winding track by which she passed ;
The stems grew fewer where it ran,
And soon the dwindling shade revealed
The trimmer works of busy man,
In fold and fence and furrowed field.
Beyond lay stretched an ample plain
With work and motion all alive ;
With men, and barge, and loaded wain ;
All rich in forage for the hive :—
The windmill on that breezy mound
Spreads its grey arms to woo the air, .
The dripping axle plunges round
In seething foam and thunder, there ;

The greedy foundry rears beneath

The ore-veined hills its blackened mole.

And slowly sends its purple breath

Along their dim blue sides to roll :

There, runs the brick-kiln's modest thatch,

And there the quarry glistens white ;

There, lines of roof and window catch

The westering sun in darts of light.

As one whom fairy hands have set

In realms unnatural and uncouth,—

As one whom icy winds have met,

New-travelled from the balmy South,—

So stood the Prince, his ardour sank,

His dainty senses backward shrank :

“What boots it, thither to pursue ?

“Could love,” he sighed, “be planted there ?

Nay, rather let me seek to woo

My Wonder to a kinder air !

In sordid blight, or reckless frost,
Love there must perish at its birth ;
Or, all its grace ethereal lost,
Discoloured, trail along the earth."

A doubtful pause, a wistful sigh,
A troubled glance across the plain,
And with slow step and downward eye,
He treads the woodland path again.
The garden bowers once more receive
Their musing, solitary lord,
And Fancy's fingers there must weave
The bliss which truth shall ne'er afford,
Peopling still lawns and voiceless shade
With visions of the stately maid.

Henceforth the record is a blank ;
No more of this vain love I know, —
Or if she ceased to cross the bank, —
Or he to gaze and sigh below ;

I know not if the idle pain,
Still smouldering, vexed his passive breast
Or joined his musings' shadowy train,
Ere long as shapeless as the rest.
For them, their birth-hour never came,
No pledges left his brooding mind,
No deed gave person to his name,
Or taught his presence to his kind :
Like his mute dust his memory sleeps,
And somewhere, in that waste of gloom,
The cypress sheddings lie in heaps
Upon his unremembered tomb.

June 2, 1853.

THE BROTHERS' DREAMS ; OR, THE MINISTRY OF
INNOCENCE.

THE violets opened in the fields
That stretched around the lonely mill ;
The busy water flowed again—
The miller's brow was gloomy still.

For darkly brooded in his heart
A father's wrath, a father's shame ;
His child had left her home, and brought
Disgrace upon an honest name.

“ Ah, when this hour of pride is past,
Ah, when these giddy dreams are o'er,
She will return,” the mother said,
“ And be our lowly child once more ! ”

“The hour of pride will pass, I trow,
But she shall be our child no more —
The foot of shame,” her husband said,
“Shall never pass my honest door.”

The water-lilies came to bloom,
The hay was carried round the mill ;
The fledgling swallow dipped her breast.
The cuckoo sang with harsher bill ;—

And now the stream brought yellow leaves
To dance upon the foaming pool,—
Now, breathing on their purple hands,
The miller's boys ran home from school.

And dark was still the father's brow,
And paler still the mother's cheek ;
For news had with the autumn come
Of one who pined alone, and weak.

The miller said, "The seed is sown,—
The flaunting summer comes between ;
But, under autumn skies, again,
The sower finds his seed, I ween."

Yet still she turned her pleading eyes,
Moist with a mother's eloquence :—
"The home that rears my boys," he said,
"Shall be the home of innocence."

It was the middle of the night,
The moon shone in with wintry gleam ;
The eldest boy cried from his bed,
"O father, let me tell my dream !

"So fearful and so sad a dream,
I cannot sleep till it be told :—
Methought I stood upon the bank
Alone, beneath the moonlight cold.

“The millpool’s face began to stir ;

I saw my sister rise, and pass

Across the water, till she came

And stood before me on the grass.

“And first she turned her to the fields

In which she walked so long last year,

And softly moaned, and wrung her hands

All dripping wet, and wan, and clear.

“And then she came beneath the house,

And flitted round the porch, and raised

Her white face full against the moon,

And on our chamber window gazed.

“I heard her say, ‘O frowning door

That sent me to a guilty grave !

O too severe a father’s doom,

That left not Heaven the time to save !

“ And then she seemed to flow away,
And all round me, far and near,
I heard a shivering wail or cry,
Of sorrow, or of pain, or fear.”

The mother stretched her hand, and caught
Her husband's arm, with shuddering strain :
“ Go, sleep, boy, sleep,” he said, and turned,
And all the room was still again.

The moonlight streak had crossed the floor,
And lit the wall with steady gleam—
The youngest boy awoke, and cried,
“ O father, harken to my dream !”

“ I toiled all day,” the miller said,
“ And fain at night my rest would keep.”
“ Nay, father dear, yet wait awhile ;
Hear only this, and you shall sleep :—

“ Methought I saw my sister lie

With pillows settled round her head ;

The orchard was all green without,

And gentle winds came o'er the bed.

“ Her cheek was pale, her hand was thin,

It rested on an open book ;

The quiet tears stole down, and towards

The soft blue skies she turned her look.

“ We brought her flowers, we sat and talked,

And all her voice was kind and meek ;

We could have almost wept, and yet

We loved to sit and hear her speak.

“ My dream went on ; her eyes were closed,

Her cheek was paler than before,

The priest was gazing on her face,

He said, ‘ Dear soul ! thy grief is o'er ! ’

“ There had been showers that morn ; but now
The sky was bright without a cloud,
And we into the garden stole,
To fetch white roses for her shroud.

“ My mother sighed, and stretched her hand
To take them from her breast again : —
Then said the priest, ‘ Nay, let them be ;
See, they are washed in heaven’s own rain.’ ”

A moment’s silence fell, the boy
Had paused ; maybe his tale was o’er :
There came a gentle sound below,
A stir, a touch upon the door.

The mother started, rising half,
And then, “ Go down, my boys,” she said ;
“ Be not afraid, for we are nigh ; ”
They sprang up lightly from the bed. —

They ran barefooted down the stairs,

They seemed to know nor doubt nor fear ;—

There came some broken sounds, and then

Another footstep met the ear.

And now a pausing on the stairs—

Now at the chamber-door they stand,—

A woman's form between the boys,

Who hold on either side her hand.

She with her garments torn and soiled,

Her drooping head and long dank locks ;

They with their little shining feet,

Their flaxen curls, and snow-white smocks.

So bright, so beautiful, are they,

So shamefaced she and desolate,

They look like cherubs, leading in

Some sinner to the Mercy-Gate.

The miller on his elbow rose,
She fell and knelt beside the bed ;
He gazed on her awhile, and then
He laid his hand upon her head.

Dec. 13. 1850.

ON A BEAUTIFUL NEW YEAR'S MORNING.



O NEWLY come ! I thought of thee

With grudging heart last night ;

I held thy hoary father's robe,

And fain had stayed his flight.

And when I knew his hour was come,

And felt him sweeping by,

I bowed, and wept, like an orphan child,

Till all my tears were dry.

The pains he brought me softened down,

And seemed like pensive pleasures ;

The pleasures gained a threefold worth,

Inestimable treasures !

I would have none of thee ; I shut
Mine ears from midnight's chime,
Lest I should hear thy bark approach
Upon the tides of Time.

'T was well I felt the parting sad,
He was an ancient friend ;
'T was ill I would not hail the new
Which God was pleased to send.

I rise, and with an altered mood
These smiling meadows pace ;
See thee already on the earth
Installed in youthful grace.

Nature hath to her kindly heart
The fair young stranger taken,
And taught her children for thy sake
A jubilee to waken.

The graceful shadows on the hill
Seem bowing down to greet thee,
And little breezes, busy, blithe,
Run o'er the trees to meet thee.

And wakening at their news, the trees
Their branches bare uplift ;
They know that folded in thy lap
Lies many a pleasant gift, —

Gifts of warm showers in balmy spring,
And slumbrous summer heat,
When birds shall love their boughs, and flocks
Shall gather at their feet ;

When through their maze of glossy leaves
Shall sportive sunbeams shoot,
And generous strength shall fill their veins
For blossom or for fruit.

Nor they alone : O well I wot
These valleys and these hills,
And these smooth pasture-breadths, the same
Presentient pleasure fills.

Fair comer ! shall I then alone
Turn churlishly from thee ?
And think thy store is only void
Of some kind gift for me ?

Ah, surely no ! and who can tell
How many, and how bright,
What treasures of long hopes fulfilled,
Or unforeseen delight ?

And if not so, yet over earth
Flows in too bounteous measure
The stream of bliss, for any heart
To lack *some* taste of pleasure.

And brought'st thou me a single joy,

Though lonely it should be,

As the late flowers that winter finds,

Or island on the sea ;

Yet I for this will take thy hand,

And bid thee hail, new year !

And pace with thee through all thy months

In thankful, friendly cheer ;

With thee will mount one other step

Upon the golden stair,

And if I live to hear thy knell

Make sad the midnight air :

While no less kind adieu I yield

To thee than to thy sire,—

Will to thy child stretch hopeful hands,

And bid him lead me higher.

Jan. 1849.

S O N N E T.



I SAW a wounded hart come down to drink ;
In its fair throat a broken arrow stood ;
Its chest and mottled thighs were stained with
 blood ;
And oft it bent its head to reach the brink,
And oft drew back, checked by its painful
 wound,
Then sank with quivering limbs upon the ground :
Its dark eye glazed ; while that untasted flood
To serve some brighter destiny was bound.
I, too, O hart ! athirst and wounded, see
The stream of joy flow by in vain ; but not

To perish hopeless on its bank like thee.
Thy fate hath brought to mind my happier lot ;
The quickening waters I may meet once more,
Spread in a glassy sea, — Eternity their shore.

August 13. 1848.

DISCOURAGED LOVE.



ERE yet she came, he heard her voice
So fresh, so kindly, and so gay,
It made the very house rejoice,
As a garden to the blackbird's lay.

And soon within the doorway smiled
The bright appearance of her face,
Where played the gladness of a child
New wedded to a girlish grace.

She saw the guest—her merry eye
Its dancing liberties restrained,
A sudden frost of courtesy
Her voice, her look, her bearing chained.

The heart that leapt to hear her come

Like a rash flower in winter fell ;

Yet who within her happy home

So dearly prized her, loved so well ?

Ah, could that eye, that voice, be won,

His home an Arcady would seem,

And he draw out beneath its sun

One bright, perpetual, peaceful dream.

And he with love would wrap her round

As with a living air of balm,—

Sweet vision ! smitten to the ground,

Beneath that blue eye's maiden-calm !

O strange it seems that faithful love

Should send its tendrils forth in vain,

And gentle natures often prove

The ministers of sharpest pain !

But Time will some full answer show,
Time will some tear-sown harvest raise,
A light upon the place of woe
Shall backwards fall from after days.

ELEUSINALIA.*



WHAT time my pillow brightened in the beam
Of a clear summer's morn, I dreamt this dream :—
One gave into my hand a silken roll,
On which were woven in a thousand dyes
The lovely fancies of a poet's soul.

It was that rich-voiced Bard's who died too soon,
Struck by too harsh reproof before his noon
Had made him firm of spirit ; he who sang
Of the "nightingale upon the beechen plot,"
And tuned to English rhyme, the "Basil-pot."

* This poem is, as it states, founded on a dream.

Upon this roll were strewn, like various showers
Of blossoms newly fallen, or diverse beads,
In letters silken wrought, and shaped with flowers,
Loose images both small and great, but sweet
To hearts that with a life poetic beat.

“ *Eleusinalia* ” had the poet named
His gathered fancies, for the which I framed
A meaning when I woke ; for was not this
The harvest of his golden field ? at least
The flower-bound sheaf that crowned his harvest-
feast ?

O let me strive to snatch, if yet I may,
Some fragments of this vision from rude Day !
And help me, waking fancy, to supply
Those delicate gifts of sleep that might not last,
Fine essences that even in sleep had passed.

I.

Pleasant it is, when to the mother's couch,
Her newly born is brought in dainty trim,
And through the curtained gloom she strives to
draw
The features from that little outline dim,
And seeks with feeble hand the feebler touch.

II.

Pleasant it is, upon a calm grey morn,
To float adown the glassy tide, meantime
An old musician, grave, but not forlorn,
Turning upon the crew his sightless eyes,
And playing o'er his mountain melodies.

III.

And pleasant is it, also, when our ears,
Amid the noises of the heedless street,
Catch those wild melodies in fragments sweet,
Tunes which the birches and the torrents know.—
Ah, pleasant too is this, but full of tears !

IV.

Pleasant it is, beneath a southern wall,
Among September's garden-flowers to sit,
Some poet's volume open on our knees,
And comrades none, except the murmuring bees
And the large butterflies that round us flit.

V.

Pleasant it is to watch the fish new freed
By the pitying angler ; faint it lies,—the wave
Rippling cold life into its panting gills ;—
It starts—it turns—with wakened rapture thrills,
And shoots afar into the plummy weed.

VI.

Pleasant it is, when fields and sky are red
With tender sunset light, beside a well
To see a little fair-haired child hold up,
Slowly, between its open palms, a cup
To which the way-worn traveller stoops his head.

VII.

Pleasant it is, when some old fault, which bound
Our spirits like a nightmare, is confest,
And all the shame in fond forgiveness drowned,
And everything above us and beneath
Is light and fragrant, as an infant's breath.

VIII.

Pleasant it is, beneath a summer sky,
Deep in the bosom of the hills to lie ;
Or in the spicy herbage of the cliff
Above the sea, while the soft day flows by
For ever at our side, and still bestows
New gradual phase of pleasure as it flows.

IX.

Pleasant it is upon the choral psalm
Or soft unwinding of a holy dirge
To float our trancèd souls into a calm,
Above disquietude of joy or grief.
Pleasant, and good it is ; ah ! why so brief ?

X.

Pleasant it is to turn, on lonely shore,
Into some cavern of primeval rock,
So silent, that the single drop which falls
In measured time upon the sparry floor,
Strikes on the blank of stillness like a shock

To muse how many thrones have been o'erhurled,
How many wastes made palaces for man,
How many palaces returned to wastes,
Since first this secret Clepsydra began
To count the minutes of the hoary world.

XI.

Pleasant it is, when slow and empty days
Have brought some heart-prized friend's return, to
gaze
On scenes, to visit haunts, that long have shown
All dull and dreary to our wistful hearts,
Now radiant in a sunshine of our own.

Pleasant to lay us down at night, and feel
One happy roof will shelter both our dreams,—
To hear the sound of beating wind and rain ;—
Nor image seas that toss, and masts that reel,
Or lonely mountain-pass, or howling plain.

Pleasant to make a game of bygone care,
Lingering from that dear side, in wanton wealth,
Because the absence lasts but with our choice,—
Yet hear, meantime, his footstep on the stair,
Or from the window catch his passing voice.

XII.

Pleasant it is, in slumber to behold
The tender loveliness of Fairyland.
Such sight of late did sleep to me unfold.
I stood beneath a hill which rose alone,
O'erlooking the gay plain on either hand.

Its sunny slope was lightly sprinkled o'er
With bosky clusters, but its forehead wore
The crowning glory of a stately tree,
Large-leaved, wide-sweeping, comeliest among
trees

That ever in cool labyrinths stayed the breeze.

And when I gained its shadow I discerned
That all its boughs were thick with hollow
flowers,
Hollow they were, and deep, whose purple cup
Might well have served some wood-nymph to
draw up
A bounteous draught to cool the fervid hours.

These basked in the full light which gave to
view

The delicate veins in all their mazy run,
And on their tender sides soft shadows threw

From waving leaves ; — half blown, these showed
a hue

Deep violet as a storm-cloud in the sun.

But what sweet picture did one flower disclose !

For in the ample concave of its breast

A mother dove sat brooding on her nest,

Fair as a flower herself, with hues that blent

As in the rainbow, green to purple flows.

Beside her, on a brother spray to this

Which held the burthened blossom, sat her
mate,

His music blending in her heart the bliss

Of spousal love with calm maternal hope, —

Nor seemed he weary thus to coo and wait.

And now I saw that o'er his glossy neck,

A tendril, springing upwards from that flower,

Had thrown its lithe green band, which gently held
That lover, well content ; for never swelled
His broad and burnished breast against the check.

And in my dream, I knew that thus should rest
That mate expectant ; thus that tendril grow,
Till the sweet patience of maternal love
Should work its end, till hope in joy should
 blow,
Till silence from beneath that downy breast
Yielding its reign, warm life should wake and
 move.

Then, all together should they rise and seek
The regions of their pleasure—floating now
Through seas of noon-tide azure—gliding now
Down purple slopes of sunset—stooping now
By rivers rosied with the dawn—and now
In fairy woods with fairy tongues to speak
And do kind wonders for the fair and weak.

Pursue, O happy troop ! pursue your flight,
Fain would I follow, marking all your joy,
But faster, further, than your soaring wings,
The dreams which showed me this, and more
Sweet things
Have flown upon the secret track of night.

Sept. 1851.

THE EMIGRANT.



THE farewell visit had to every friend
Been made : her task was done ; and now the
road
That led her home was o'er the downs. The
shades
Of that dear village at her feet she saw,
And as she walked alone, the thoughts and tears,
Kept back by force through all that busy day,
Rose irrepressible. She stopped and sat
Upon a knoll where crept the humble thyme,
Sweet in its early bloom ; with fragrant breath
The breeze that haunts the downs about her
strayed,
And to her wistful eyes the dying day

Put all its beauty forth. The slopes that
stretched

Beneath her feet, blushed to the sunset sky, —
Then came the tufted hedgerows, and the tracts
Of quiet pasture-grounds that slept between ;
Some with a centre darkened by the shade
Of broad and solitary oak, or group
Of elms, to which, with busy voice and wing,
The rooks were crowding home, — some sprinkled
o'er

With placid herds of cattle, some still brown
With scattered hay ; and ever and anon, —
Catching a parting sunbeam, — the shy stream
Revealed its course through all those pleasant
fields,

Then glided into arching shade again,
While from its bank the sauntering angler dropped
His line upon its glassy breast, or stooped
The maiden with her pitcher. Through the
boughs

Of orchard trees the cottage gables laughed,
Past which his team along the curving road
The whistling labourer guided. From the Bridge
Arose the shouts of children at their play ;
O there and thus had she a thousand times
Played through a merry childhood ! Crimson
light

Flamed in the windows of the old Church tower,
That had so lately to the hills around
Given forth the music of her wedding-chime,—
Her's, but a Bride last week, an Emigrant
To-morrow morn from England's happy shores.

She sat and gazed until the tranquil sky
Had yielded up its glories ; in the west,
Only a line of pale green light remained,
O'er which, with meek and holy lustre, hung
The evening star ;—so o'er the broad dark sea
And lonely vessel on the morrow's night
Its gentle rays should beam, a link to home,

A witness and a type to wanderers' hearts,
Of that pervading Presence and that Love
Which changes not with time or scene. She
 clasped
Her hands, and bowed her forehead, and a prayer
Breathed from a trusting spirit, flowed to Heaven.
And when she took again her homeward path,
Her step fell cheerily on the turf, her heart
Was lightened like a cloud that floats away,
When showers were ended, over the blue sky ;
Nor, when the curfew chimes with sudden call
Awakened the clear echoes of the hills,
Fell they with sound too blithe upon a heart
Composed and gladdened by love, hope, and faith.

1845.

EARTH'S SANCTUARY.



THERE is on earth one special, sacred shrine,
 With human love's best offerings ever crowned ;
 One spot whereon the constant sunbeams shine
 Of peace and hope, though all be dark around.

Bold voices may be rife, and lawless feet,
 The heavens to mantling clouds may yield their
 face,—

This shrine is safe from sound or step unmeet,
 No cloud can from *this* spot the sunbeam chase.

What is this favoured place ? — a Home of peace
 Where youth expands in innocence and love ?
 Ah, fair is this ! but love may chill or cease,
 And innocence a blighted flower may prove.

Or is it Manhood's course, well aimed and pure,
Shaped by high impulse and serene endeavour?
Ah! who that stands may fall not? who is sure
Until the battle hour is past for ever?

Holy and dear the Temples where we meet,
But does no evil e'er find entrance there?
Alas! too oft those mournful walls repeat
The idle echoes of a heartless prayer!

Not Home or Church, pure Youth or upright
Prime,
Or saintly Age, are safe from shade or fall;
All these confess the laws of earth and time,—
Change, failure, blemish, loss, may pass o'er all.

This is earth's law; then seek we on her breast
A spot untouched by evil or by gloom?
Yes, one such spot she boasts of perfect rest,
Beauty, and holiness,—a Christian's Tomb.

Here Peace unvexed takes up her dwelling ; here
Sit Hope and Memory through the quiet days,
Talking and weaving wreaths, and find new cheer
As in each other's gentle eyes they gaze.

From hence does pining Sorrow hold aloof,
Or coming, self-forgetful, learns to smile ;
Here is long rest, and ease without reproof,
Honour, which after-fault shall ne'er defile.

Mute is Detraction in this charmèd air,
Envy far off, Love ever paces round,
Heedful that tender words and quiet prayer
Alone should murmur o'er the happy ground.

Who calls thee gloomy, sacred bed of rest,
Where Life, and Love, and Power, their couch
have made ?

Soft is the pillow which a Saviour pressed,
And blessings linger in the sacred shade.

April 2. 1850.

FAIR ISMAY OF THE MILL.



FAIR Ismay sits at the spinning wheel
Beside her father's mill ;
But oft doth hang the idle thread,
And oft her foot is still.

There is light in the glance of her wandering eye,
As she looks on the purple moor,
On the wood that droops to the glassy loch,
And the valley's emerald floor.

Who is this in such sore speed
Comes pressing up the hill ?
“ O haste ! ” he cries, with panting breath,
“ Fair Ismay of the Mill !

“The young lord lies upon the rocks,
He has fallen with his steed,—
A dying man, alas ! is he,
And prays thee come with speed.”

Forth then stept the miller's dame,—
“And this is news of woe !
But wherefore, I pray, should daughter of mine
To the young lord's death-bed go ?”

“O whither else should I go ?” she cried,
“O mother, let be !” she cried ;
She skims like a frightened bird let loose
Along the steep brae side.

* * * * *

They have drawn him from the stony hill
Into a sheltered nook,—
A sward where slender birches group
Beside a falling brook.

The mossy stones lie round like sheep,
The wild rose trails her wreath,
The harebells hang their clustering heads
Beside that bed of death.

The scared huntsmen stand aloof,
By his browsing steed each one,
But the grey-haired father, kneeling, weeps,
Over his dying son.

Fair Ismay, silent, pale, and swift,
Comes gliding to the place,
She lifts his head upon her knees,
And wipes the death-dewed face.

“Hear now !” he said, with low, clear voice,
And the hunters all drew nigh,
“This woman is a wedded wife,
Her lawful husband I.

“ I married her at St. Ninian’s shrine,
This will the priest avow,
And thou, my wife, before all eyes
The bridal token show.”

She drew a ribbon from her breast,
And, in the chequered shade,
The little ring before all eyes
Its glittering answer made.

* * * * *

THE OLD DEERSTALKER.*

WHAT, huntsman, propped upon thy rifle still,
With eyes fixed earthwards ? leave the mountain
side ;

Such musings better fit thy blazing hearth.

The shadows of the night from peak to peak
Come to thee frowning, through the hazy sky
One sad and watery planet shines alone.

Hear how the dull brooks mutter, ill at ease,
And with irreverent breath the gusty winds
Disturb the white hairs on thy furrowed brow ;
Go down, go down, thou aged man, and leave

* Suggested by an anecdote in Scrope's " Days of Deer-stalking."

These crags to meet the rising blast alone.
But thee doth triumph in the vale await,
Shouts from the young, and graspings of the hand
From thy grey brother-huntsmen, who shall joy
In thy success with spirits frank, undimmed
By cloud of envy ; for what other hand
But thine should bring those antlers down at last,
That have for centuries twice-told possessed
The mountain tops, by rifle unattained,
And which, despising meaner quarry, thou
Till now hast followed from thy days of youth,
Through darkness, or by noon-day stern and still,
Or wrapped around with foldings of the mists ?
Nor seldom did the mountain storm surprise
And shut thee blinded, deafened, in its heart,
While all the thunder pulses of its life
Throbbled fierce about thee ; well too, wert thou
known
To the far-sighted eagle, as she looked
Down from the mountain's battlements, and well

To the wild raven, who scarce stirred her wing
To rise from the bare crag at thy approach ;
So went thy years by, coloured, filled, absorbed
By one pursuit, one patient, strong design,
Which was to thee a passion, yea, a life
Wherein was folded all thy other life.

But not to mountain or to mountain storm,
To eagle, or to raven on her crag,
Wast thou so known as to that antlered king,
That proud and ancient Being of the hills.
Foes were ye, foes unto the death ; but friends
In some strange sort withal,—as two brave knights,
In the intervals of mortal strife, will drink
Both of one spring, and lay them down to sleep
Under the same green tree ;—ye had become
Needful unto each other, and the life
Of each had been, without each, tame and void.

How often, from his fortress peering down,
What time the morning vapours cleared away,

Has he looked boldly out for thee, and stood
Majestic, waiting thy approach below !
Then turned, and tossing once his careless head,
Dropped down the steep into some dark ravine,
Upon whose floor the crowding mountains set
Their feet, reclining backwards in the air,
And to whose depths himself and the white stream
That plunged from off the forehead of the rock,
Alone brought tidings of the life without.
How often hast thou felt thy heart beat thick,
What time some sudden trace of him thou
sought'st
Has met thy heedful gaze !—whether the print
Left by his foot upon the oozy bank
Of limpid shallows where he slaked his thirst ;
Or in some lonely dell the ferny bed
Marked by late pressure of his slumbering limbs ;
Or haply stem of pine-tree, scarred and peeled,
Showed thee his token ; or, in headlong race
Leaping, as leap the streams, from crag to crag,

Thy breath, thy being, launched on the strong wind,
Thou hast rushed on to gain some vantage point,
Meet his full front, and lift a surer aim.

Or thou hast seen him when the cataract's brow,
Made crimson by the solemn sunset, gleamed
Athwart the verdant gloom of bending trees ;
There, dark and tall against the glowing sky,
He crowned the ascending vista, while the flood
Seemed, vassal-like, beneath his feet to flow,
He, spirit presiding of those floods and shades.

And what if, night by night, the rising stars
Still saw thee baffled from the wastes return ?
Yet not the less didst thou with cheerful heart
Set by thy rifle in the accustomed nook,
Still sanguine of the morrow ; not the less
Didst thou arise while yet the earth was dark,
And strain thy sight through the grey dawn to
catch

Those branching antlers, which less practised eyes
Had deemed the naked boughs of distant fir.

Now never, never more, those branching horns
Moving between the ridges of the rocks
Shall greet thee ; never shalt thou feel again
The sudden start and breathlessness, nor joy
Which eager chase, or plot of wary skill,
Have brought to thee so oft. Alas ! old man,
Hast thou not with the quenching of that life
Put thy life's sunshine out ? Henceforth the hills
Are blank to thee, and thou with listless foot
Shalt tread their swelling sides : day is become
Aimless, and night to thee will only bring
Dreams of past joy to burthen with a sigh
Thy waking thought ;—or will those dying eyes
In sleep again reproach thee, eloquent,
And through their tears majestic, as the look
Of murdered king, turned on the ruthless hand
That pierced his royal heart ? for so they met
Thine own, when leaping downward from the crag
Upon the heathery platform where he lay,
A moment didst thou gaze upon thy work,

Then, shrinking back, stoodst with averted head
Breathless, until the heather and the fern
Were shaken by the dying pangs no more.

* * * * *

The thick drops of the mountain storm have
fallen,

And from the heather and the fern have washed
Their crimson stains ; with fuller tones the brooks
Call to each other through the listening night ;
The winds are quiet ; far and wide o'er heaven
Dispersed in fleecy shreds the lightened clouds ;
While on the naked peaks and slumbering tarns
A silvery lustre from the moon released
Streams suddenly ; and falling rivulets shine
Like snow-drifts cast upon the winter hills.

Thereat the pensive huntsman, roused, uplifts
His eyes that run along the mountain range
Instinctively, to visit the hill-tops,
Taught by familiar use of many years ;

Then round about him draws his plaid, and takes
His way with strides adown the rough descent.
Anon the heights are left—the vacant heights—
The mournful, moaning heights : he treads the
vale,
And sees the cheerful light of his own hearth,
And from the door his grandsons come with looks
That question of his sport. To them he spake,
And as he said, passed on : “Go to the hills,
And fetch the deer that I have slain ; it lies
Among the heather, by the ‘Raven Crag.’”
So went, upon the night that closed a day
Of triumph, and of life-long hope possessed,
That old man to his couch with dreary heart.

THE BREEZE IN THE CHURCH.



'T WAS a sunny day, and the morning psalm
 We sang in the church together ;
 We felt in our hearts the joy and calm
 Of the calm and joyous weather.

The slow, and sweet, and sacred strain,
 Through every bosom stealing,
 Checked every thought that was light and vain,
 And waked each holy feeling.

We knew by its sunny gleam, how clear
 Was the blue sky smiling o'er us ;
 And in every pause of the hymn could hear
 'The wild birds' happy chorus.

And lo ! from its haunt by cave or rill,
With a sudden start awaking,
A breeze came fluttering down the hill,
Its fragrant pinions shaking.

Through the open windows it bent its way,
And down the chancel's centre,
Like a privileged thing that at will might stray,
And in holy places enter.

From niche to niche, from nook to nook,
With a lightsome rustle flying,
It lifted the leaves of the Holy Book
On the altar-cushion lying.

It fanned the old clerk's hoary hair
And the children's bright young faces ;
Then vanished, none knew how or where,
Leaving its pleasant traces.

It left sweet thoughts of summer hours

Spent on the quiet mountains ;

And the church seemed full of the scent of
flowers,

And the trickling fall of fountains.

The image of scenes so still and fair

With our music sweetly blended,

While it seemed their whispered hymn took share,

In the praise that to heaven ascended.

We thought of Him who had poured the rills,

And through the green mountains led them,

Whose hand, when He piled the enduring hills,

With a mantle of beauty spread them.

And a purer passion was borne above,

In a louder anthem swelling,

As we bowed to the visible Spirit of Love

On those calm summits dwelling.

August, 1841.

SONNETS

ON

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A CHILD UPON NEW YEAR'S EVE.



I.

METHOUGHT I saw a household full of mirth,
 The children sported, elders smiling gazed ;
 But mute and unregarded on the hearth,
 Sat an old man in flowing garments wrapt.
 The clock gave warning, and the children clapped
 Their hands with laughter ; but that old man
 raised
 His time-bent form, muttering, " I must be gone."
 They heard or heeded not ; but as he passed,
 His garments folded round a fair-haired child,
 That somewhat stood apart, and something pale,

And it therein was hidden — carried on
Forth to the darkness and the midnight blast ;
While in that room was left an outcry wild,
The shriek of childhood, and the parents' wail.

II.

I followed the dark form that streamed through
night,
Till on earth's verge he stood ; a hueless
blank

Beneath him, and in front a silver bank
Of fleecy clouds, whence issued, ardent, bright,
A youth in act to climb the world's steep
brow.

Above was glory, and this song through space :
“ Poor outspent slave of Time, go, seek thy
tomb !

Hie thee, gay youngling, on thy little span !
But to thine endless present enter thou,
Foreknown from ages, seed of ransomed man ! ”

That youth went darkening o'er the earth's dim
face,

That aged form flowed out in utter gloom,
And from his cloudy train with radiant eyes
And gleaming hair, I saw the child arise.

Oct. 24. 1852.

THE FISHERMAN'S BRIDE.

A FRAGMENT.



AMONG the rocks that fenced that lonely shore,
A pleasant nook the fisherman had found ;
There blew the heath-bell, there the ocean's
 roar
Was softened to a low complying sound.

And there he built his cabin, with what art
For grace or comfort his own hand supplied,
Taught by the earnest motions of his heart
For her who should dwell there, his youthful
 bride.

“ Here will she live,” he murmured as he
wrought,

“ In these smooth sands, these cliffs, this rolling
sea

Will find her joy, nor once in word or thought
Regret the inland fields she left for me.”

And here she came ; and like an April gleam
Shone on the solitary place, and made
His life as calm and happy as a dream
Dreamt by a child at noontide in the shade.

Her smile within his heart went o'er the seas,
Colouring with beauty all his lonely day ;
Its power was stronger than the tide or breeze
To speed his oar at evening to the bay.

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SEQUEL.

ADDED SOME YEARS AFTERWARDS.

Thus far the Muse had wound her placid rhymes,
Thus far the picture drawn, in light alone ;
Then, frail of purpose, left to after-times
The touch of shadow and the stronger tone.

So let it rest ;—whate'er she held in store,
What worthier fruit might deepening pathos
give,
Be this resigned for ever, evermore,
And only let the simple spring-tide live.

Still hold, fair scene, thy prime of happiness ;
Stand, smiling bride, with welcome on the
beach ;
And let the dancing boat still shoreward press,
And the glad boatman's gaze before it reach.

One farewell sunbeam, slanting past her hair,
Plays on the hand with which he shades his
 eyes,
While Hesper on the cliff stands large and fair,
And clasps their little world into the skies.

Dec. 10. 1851.

THE DUTCH SKATER.

Now straight in course as star that shoots
By night down autumn skies serene,
Now like a swallow at its play,
With many a wheel and bend around
Sharp jutting points of meadow ground
From which the splintered willows lean,
Or brown banks shaggy with old roots,
The maiden takes her homeward way ;
Her young face glows, her eye is bright,
Her limbs are full of one delight,
From parted lips the happy breath
Before her floats in silvery wreath ;

She meets the wind in joy and pride
Like one that swims against the tide ;
She meets the wind—abroad she flings
Her heart and soul upon its wings.

Before her shine the yellow skies,
Cheerful and cold ;—against their light
Gaunt windmills here and there arise,
And here and there a thin beam slants
On stone-walled tracts of fallow ground,
On far-off dam's long level height,—
And here and there through lonely knot
Of elm-trees shows the farmer's roof,
And here and there in sheltered nook
The patient cattle drawn aloof
Turn after her their listless eyes.
She hears afar the whistling boy,
The barking dogs, the village bell :
All comes alike to her—all well,
A swelling of that bounteous flood

Of strength, of freedom, of delight,
That thrills her soul, that speeds her blood.

O listen ! a strange under-sound !

Again ;—it spreads, it gathers round !

One waver, one quick glance of fear,

And sudden as a helpless bird

That drops death-smitten in its flight,

Her form is lost in mid career.

Not long thy pangs endure, O child,

Some moments of a frantic strife,—

Some moments of blank terror wild

In darkness and bewilderment ;

A moment when across her brain

The record of her little life

Swift as a lightning flash is sent,—

A moment when like life itself

Her home is pictured on her mind,—

She sees her father grave and kind,

His plate pushed from him, and the book

Spread out before him on the board :
The grandame in her snowy cap,
And fair-haired Aennehen in her nook,
The porringer upon her lap ;—
The flickering hearth-fire, the long shelf
Rich with its well-prized porcelain hoard,
And, shining in that firelight dim,
The polished oak frames on the wall.
She sees them for a moment all :
It parts, — it shifts, — new visions swim
Around and on her ! — deep blue sky,
And sunny grass, and waving trees,
The gusts of music eddying by.
Where wakes the truth ? where ends the dream ?
O, happier now than when the breeze
Blew o'er thee, and the sunset shone
Before thee, on the frozen stream !
And happier shalt thou be anon,
When, landed on the heavenly shores
And met by shining, singing bands,

Thou movest up with eager pace,
For there, beside the radiant doors,
With the old smile upon her face,
Thy long-lost mother waiting stands.

April 5. 1849.

THE "AMEN OF THE STONES."

FROM THE GERMAN.



AGED and blind the holy priest went forth
 From city unto city wandering far,
 Led by a little child, and evermore
 Preaching the word of Christ with fervent lips,
 As if the fire of youth was in his heart.
 And it befell that to a lonely vale,
 O'erhung and compassed with huge blocks of
 stone,
 The child did guide his footsteps, and thus spake,
 Less with an evil purpose than the light
 And idle thoughtlessness of boyish jest :

"Here, father, are there many men that wait
To hear thy preaching."

Then the old man roused
The strength that was within him; gathered up
His sacred lore, and turned him round and spake,
Exhorted, warned, rebuked, and comforted,
And with a soul so earnest, that mild tears
Brake forth, and on his silver beard fell down:
And when, as ever was his wont, he closed
The holy lesson with our Lord's own Prayer,
And said, "Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power.
And Glory, evermore," then rang a sound
As of a thousand voices through the vale,
"Amen! Eternal God, Amen! Amen!"
Then the boy trembled, and he cast him down
Before the old man's feet, and told his sin;
And the blind priest made answer to him thus,
"Hast thou not read, my son, should men be
mute

The very stones would cry aloud? My son,
Play with God's word no more, for it is quick
And powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword:
And if men to its voice make stone their hearts,
Will for itself make human hearts from stone."

1843.

SEPARATION.



As one that on some feat of strength intent,
Pausing, throws back his frame, holds in his
breath,

And in such self-retraction seeks new force
For yet more strenuous effort,—so my heart,
Struggling with absence, distance, and with fate,
Will ofttimes gather in its swarming troop
Of thoughts and yearnings, holding them in
poise

Suspended, if that haply from the leash
They with fresh impulse bounding forth may win
Some vantage o'er its sorrow,—may achieve
Some inner intercourse, some touch of soul
With that belovèd one who claims them all.

Alas ! how many, since the woods and fields
First saw the secret tears of suffering love,
How many, with such arts, such aims, such
hopes,

Born of despair, have wrestled with their love !
And has it all been fruitless ? Must we think
That all this strain and stress of constant love
Dies down into the past with selfish joys,
And narrow cares ; with Nature's mists and hues,
With all the things that were not while they
seemed ?

O, lives not thence some record, somewhere
stamped ?

Works there not thence some power on time ? or
does

The faithful bosom of Eternity
Foster from this strong seed some far result ?

April, 1851.

THE FISHERMAN'S RETURN.



THE night was closing in, and on the sea
Pressed with dark weight, from which the fretful
tide

Broke out, and dimly whitened down the shore,
What time the fisherman ran up his keel
Upon the grating beach, and lowered his mast
With practised speed that shamed his lusty sons :
They stood with shouldered baskets on the shore,
But he threw up a quick and sidelong glance
Where, like a hanging star upon the cliff,
His cottage window gleamed. "Go on," he said,
"I follow soon," and he stooped down, and
feigned

Some work upon his craft. But being left,
The man sat down, and faced the sea, and
propped

A rugged cheek upon his rugged hand,
And groaned aloud. What was that groan, and
why

Did he delay to take the homeward path?

Six days ago his help-mate from his door

Was carried to the churchyard. She had been

A woman in the hardness of her life,

Hardened, like him, in face and voice and
ways,

Perhaps in nature: sympathy and love

In each, may be, surviving, long had ceased

To put their tokens forth, even as the sap

Sleeps in the winter woods. And when this
stroke

Severed the long companionship of toil

The hardness melted not, to lookers on,

In him who stayed behind.

But since her death

Now was his first return from wonted toil ;

Now first his door should open on the change, —

A gulph in the old flow of fifty years.

Another hand should take the damp sea-coat,

And hang the nets and set the platters round.

Therefore he lingered, gazing on the sea.

Before him broke its dreary, drifting waste ;

As broken, and as drifting, and as drear,

He saw his life around him : and that hour

He wished to lay his head beneath the waves,

There with drowned eyes and ears and heart to

lie, —

To lie, and never see his home again.

Jan. 25. 1851.

“ THAT MORTALITY MIGHT BE SWALLOWED
UP OF LIFE.”



LIKE sunken vessels, like sea-buried towns,
All that has owed to death or time its birth,
Its fickle beauty, or its bitter strength, —
All change whose dawning made the eager heart
Beat high with expectation, but to droop
In vain regret ere yet its noon was told —
Pageants and strifes, wild aimings, restless hopes, —
The tender, mournful honours of the grave, —
The bursting grief, the long enduring ache, —
All absence, parting, weariness, desire, —
All shall be swallowed up ; all shall go down
Beneath the inflowing of the sea of life ;
Above, the luminous eternal Calm

Shall settle on its face, and none shall lean
With wistful gazing o'er its depths, as once
The mariner looked down for buried Tyre,
And none shall leave their joyful harps unstrung
To pace its shore with pensive steps, and seek
For fragments left of the remorseful tide:
Nor tide, nor wind, on that eternal sea
For ever still, yet fresh, shall bring to view
The unloved relics of mortality.

Jan. 15. 1853.

A SOUTH WIND IN APRIL.



THIS April wind
 Flows through the land, and ever in its train
 Life wakens. Life, on its full bosom caught,
 Streams with its stream, in beauty, scent and
 sound.

The stock-dove pours her passion forth, and joy
 Is clamoured from the rookery: the blithe cock
 Shakes his clear cymbal in the farmer's yard;
 The very air is warbling o'er the downs
 Where late the skylark cowered on ruffled
 breast;

The blackbird spells his cadence o'er,—the same,
 Yet still of all desired. The Poet's heart
 Sends forth its tender yearning messages

In numbers sweet, or sweeter thoughts unsaid.

The ploughman from the fresh-turned furrow
draws

Odours which make him whistle for content ;

The babe is glad, it knows not why ; and lines

From cheerful hymns accost the sick man's
thoughts :—

He looks forth from his window, and he sees

The far-off hills spread out their smiling breasts

To greet the comer and invite his sweep ;

And he, too, spreads abroad his sun-lit soul

To meet a breath which stirs its placid joys ;

For in that bounteous visitant he knows

The Maker's presence, and the Giver's love.

April 6. 1853.

EARLY DEATH.



SHE cometh down from the green hill-tops,
From the golden slopes of wheat,
From the leafy depth of the summer copse,
Where blossom and herb are sweet ;

From the nooks in the meadows, dewy and cool,
Where winds the clear dark river,
Where the willows shadow the glassy pool,
And the rushes bend and quiver.

She watcheth no more the steps of the dawn
Pass over the mountain's brow ,
She standeth no more on the household lawn,
Made rich by the sunset's glow.

She turneth away from the home whose eaves

The vine with the rose surroundeth ;

And all the sweet haunts of her youth she leaves,

Where the voice of joy resoundeth.

Slow and silent the maid departs,

For the downward way is steep ;

And the friends of her childhood with aching
hearts

Press round her steps and weep.

And fainter comes from the distant bowers

The sound of the wood-bird's lay ;

Ever more faint the scent of flowers,

And the smile of the summer day.

And she passeth into a region bleak,

Where the clinging mists are chilly,

With a drooping form, that, fair and meek,

Hangs like a broken lily.

Feebler ever her steps appear,
Quicker her troubled breath ;
For the sound of billows breaks on her ear,
The roar of the sea of death.

Behold ! she stands on the cloudy shore,
The salt waves wash her feet :
Have they power to bid the life once more
Through her quickened pulses beat ?

Is there health in the breath of the cold sea-gales
That her eye lights up anew ?
That a sudden gleam in her face prevails
O'er the shadowy ashen hue ?

No, never more shall that pulse be stirred,
Nor that cheek with fresh life glow ;
But she drinks in sounds by us unheard,
And sights we may not know.

O mourners ! cease to wail and weep
As she smiles her calm farewell ;
Fear not for her the wild winds' sweep
Nor the ocean's sullen swell.

She sees a track that will guide her o'er
The billow's crested height, —
Where piercèd Feet have walked before,
And have left a crimson light.

O, what Hand from the heavens above
Her outstretched hand doth meet !
O, what eternal Arms of love
Upbear her faithful feet !

On in their strength, Beloved, pass,
And the ocean's troubled face
Shall change ere long to the sea of glass
Which the heavenly hills embrace.

March 25. 1842.

THE OLD QUARRY.



IN the heart of the wide wood
The old forsaken quarry lies ;
Darksome pines around it brood ;
Oft between it and the skies
Float the heron's lonely wings ;
The dusky badger steals to drink
In its pools and sluggish springs ;
In the weeds that mat its brink
Rolls the she-fox with her young ;
Ancient paths about it wind,
Choked with fern, with brambles hung,
Hard to follow or to find.
Yet this place, so wild, so still,
Once with busy echoes rang,

To the chisel tinkling shrill—

To the hammer's lusty clang—

To the shout or song of men,

Roll of wheels, and stamp of steed ;

For its womb was wealthy then,

Minister to human need.

Day by day the glistening stone

From its yielding depths was torn,

That in dark repose had grown

Since the hour that earth was born.

And without the lonely wood

Rose a dwelling, strong and fair,

That could mock the winter's flood,

That could shield from summer's glare.

Then did life, and joy, and love,

Hasten there to make their nest ;

There did mirthful households move,

There did peaceful households rest.

Rest at night and mirth by day

In those walls were fostered warm,

While the parent quarry lay
Visited by frost and storm.

Winter on its dreary breast
Ever binds his sternest chains,
And with howlings of unrest
There the lingering blast complains.
Mother Nature o'er it moans,
Who herself must share its doom,
When the Shrine of living stones
Has been builded from her womb.

March 9, 1853.

MOONLIGHT FANCIES.



I.

O Moon, that sittest sovereign of the sky,
What see'st thou with that calm far-reaching eye?
Thou shinest upon white and glittering towns,
On trembling lakes, on busy mountain springs,
On parks, and meadows close, and treeless downs.
Thou shinest on tall ships that rove the deep,
Upon whose plunging sterns their helmsmen keep
A homesick vigil, dreaming of far things.

II.

Thou shinest upon pleasant garden-haunts,
Kissing their woven bowers and cherished plants,

Throwing sweet mystery on familiar nooks
Whose foliage trembled late to words of love,
Whose shades were lit erewhile by tender looks.
Thou shinest on the lonely woodman's floor,
And on his children's beds, while round his door
The timid creatures of the forest move.

III.

Thou shinest through the fir-trees, on the hands
And weapon of the robber, as he stands
And listens for the hoofs along the road.
On the poor pedlar look'st thou, who beneath
A corn-stack slumbers, pillowed by his load.
The gipsies' tents are gleaming in thy rays,
While their spent fire upon the bank decays,
And browse their placid cattle in the heath.

IV.

The stern old ruin smiles to meet thy beams ;
Bathed in thy light the village churchyard dreams ;

And while his weary nurse her charge forgets,
The sick man turns towards thee his hollow eyes,
And through his feeble brain toil hopes, regrets,
Old plans, and shadows of old worldly cares,
Crowding like phantoms, across fluttering prayers
Which through that chaos strive to pierce and
rise.

V.

The narrow grating of the prison-cell
Thou silverest ; and the drowsy sentinel
Sees his black shadow on the rampart thrown,
And, looking towards thee, hums a listless stave.
Thou gleamest on the lighthouse bleak and lone,
And draw'st the thundering tides against its base,
Or leanest o'er the harbour's glassy face,
Where scarcely sounds the breaking of a wave.

VI.

The maiden, stealing from her sleepless bed,
On the bowered casement leans her aching head,

And ponders o'er the tale of her crossed love,
While tears that slowly fill her wistful eyes
Make thy wide orb yet larger in the skies :
Meantime her sister's rosy sleep is stirred
With visions of her garden, book, or bird,
And round her lips the happy dimples move.

VII.

To thee wild Scotland's bloodhounds now are
baying,
O'er ferny fells her deer beneath thee straying ;
The plover thee on Sarum's plains salutes,
And thee the nightingale by Devon's streams ;
On Cumbrian rocks to thee the owlet hoots.
O bounteous Moon ! thou giv'st me wings to fly,
Mine eye draws visions from thy steady eye,
My fancies glide along thy gliding beams !

August 3. 1849.

THE EAGLE.



THE sun rides high in heaven, the cliff-tops white
His glory catch, a field of quivering light
Shines the broad bay, and round its silver reach
Runs like a band of gold the yellow beach.

On the rough peaks that battlement her nest,
Pluming her lifted wings and ample breast,
The mother-eagle stands, and sunward turns
Her steady eye, which thence replenished burns.

Then launching forth, she hovers, poised above
The rock which shelters all that claims her love,
Then soars, then, swooping downwards for her
prey,

A hunter's aim hath caught her breast midway.

A moment droop her wings, and stretch anew ;
The stones beneath some life-drops large and few
Receive ; then floats she upwards to her nest,
The light winds sporting round that wounded
breast.

Roused by the sound of her broad pinions, first
Her young ones into happy tumult burst ;
Her mate turns round his glad expecting eyes ;—
A look of silent woe to both replies.

All day in helpless sufferance of her fate,
She lay ; in helpless sorrow watched her mate,
Save when by clamour of his nestlings driven
To meet the mockery of the sunny heaven.

Ah, little dreamt the fisher on the shore,
Who through those cloudless skies beheld him soar,
Then, like a shooting meteor, earthward dart,
How joyless was that wing, how sad that heart !

* * * * *

The sun had travelled round the bay, and threw
On rocks and blushing sea a tender hue :
Beside his wife the happy huntsman stood,
And gazed on the fair scene in placid mood.

He knew not, in that smiling cliff that caught
The rosy tints, what lingering anguish wrought,
What noble creature lay with gasping beak,
And wings spread out with heavings slow and
weak.

He knew not, as he watched the sun to rest,
How had those dull and filmy eyes distress,
Already lost for aye that dearest sight,
The fount, long loved, long sought, of their own
light.

Oct. 29. 1848.

THE COMPLAINT.



THE backward flower may yet be wooed to blow, —
The dying flame may yet be set aglow, —
The truant bird be lured — the fickle heart
May be won back by spell of love's sweet art.

But thou, so kind, so constant, yet so cold,
What spell for thee shall all love's store unfold?
How shall it mend where there is nought to
blame?

Where chiding and where tears are put to shame?

For who may chide or weep where all is sure?
Thou art a pillar at whose side secure
Thy love may stand; nay, but her foolish breast
Sought rather a soft cushion where to rest.

Yet, be what else thou may'st, still be thou mine,
And this veiled love may yet break forth and
shine,

Bathing my happy heart in tender light:

The early grey turns oft to noonday bright,
While clouds will gather on the summer morn,
And the poor hearts it smiled on, sit forlorn.

STANZAS.



NEVER, when once the breeze of love
Hath chosen with its wing to move
The water's unsuspecting breast, —
Never again, by night or day,
In still September or leafy May,
Shall it return to former rest.

Sometimes, when all the heavens are clear,
A shade shall on its face appear
Fleeting and thin, but still a shade ;
And wandering airs shall have strange power
Upon this lake, though not a flower
Be by their gentle visiting swayed.

And it shall break into a quiver,
From shore to shore shall curve and shiver,
And to its deepest springs below
Shall send a quick, disturbing sound,
Therein a thousand echoes found
Shall stir, reply, and upwards flow.

Or haply this poor lake shall groan
Beneath a tempest of its own,
Writhing, and dark, and full of grief;
While all the waters else that fill
The untouched cisterns of the hill
Glass the blue sky and glossy leaf.

THE DROWNED LOVER.

(Improvised.)



SHINE on her, pitying Moon ;
And, ye sonorous tides,
O, turning soft and turning soon,
Bear up against the smooth rock's sides
Her long-required boon,—
The only boon of you she asks,
The aim of all her lonely tasks,
Her long love's hope, her long love's end :
See now how she doth bend,
From the crag whereon she sits,
Her large clear eyes across the watery field
To that wandering sail that dips
Its whiteness in the sunset's parting hue,
As though her life's one secret it revealed.

And ever and anon, by fits,
Sweet fragments and wild burthens, old and new
She sendeth from her dreamy lips ;—
Music which the dead man hears
Although she knows it not,
Where he lies, upon his sailor-cot,
Tapestried o'er with sea-weeds fine,
With coral crusted, fair shells beaded.
Could a richer canopy be needed
To make an emperor's chamber shine ?
Ah, soon, fair maid, it shall be thine !
And strange and lustrous creatures of the sea
Shall thy torch-bearers be,
Thou shalt be lighted by those living torches,
Under the agate porches,
To that tryst for which thou yearnest,
And whence thou never more returnest.

THE REMONSTRANCE.



AND dost thou quarrel with the faithful heart,
To thee and to thy griefs long set apart,
Because it yet can listen to the glee
Of innocent souls, and yield them response free?

For that it hath been chosen to receive
A tale of joy, is it less strong to grieve?
Or is the chamber for thy sorrow grown
Unmeet, wherein some few stray flowers are
thrown?

Chid'st thou thy friend, that she went forth awhile
To taste the air, and see the summer smile,
If from the breeze and sun she did but woo
New strength to suffer? And is this untrue?

Unkind and shallow this? O jealous friend,
Be still; the sympathies that seem to spend
Their strength on alien claimants, spending grow,
And are more large to cradle all thy woe.

Prompt Echo, to the whistling shepherd-boy,
Will from the hill give back his note of joy;
But should her friend, the pensive Bard, draw nigh,
And, grudging, chide her for the gay reply;

So truly she takes up her wonted part,
Pours back his own sad music on his heart;
So steals herself his voice of tender blame,
That he is hushed, content for very shame.

Nov. 12. 1847.

THE SIGH OF A SICK MIND.



WATERS, full-foliaged trees, and summer wind,
Around this weary head flow, wave, and play ;
Do what ye can without, O, might ye find
Into the wearier heart your healing way !

For of its own due comforts doth it lie
Forsaken ; Hope, its verdant tree, is dead ;
Pleasure, within her mournful banks, is dry ;
The buoyant breeze of Energy has fled.

Time was there, summer spirits, when I thought
No fear or trouble long could vex the breast,
If to the medicine of your presence brought,
There to be wooed and whispered into rest.

So were mine healed of yore : upon the grass,

Speckled with sunshine and with shade, I lay ;

I shut mine eyes, and heard the soft winds pass,

And with them seemed my cares to float away.

These were chance troubles, waking from without,

Therefore might outward influence give them

ease ;

But the self-sown distress, the inborn doubt,

Ye gentle powers, how shall ye reach to these ?

Ye cannot, O ye cannot ! deeper springs

Than yours must flow to bathe this sickly mind ;

A Breeze must touch it, of more potent wings,

Ere in your haunts the ancient joys I find.

STANZAS.



*“ I WOULD that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me : ”*

So sang one day a wistful Bard
Beside the unquiet sea.

And many a heart with him
That restless burthen sings,
When Memory wakes, or Nature's powers
Disturb its sleeping springs.

O busy winds that run
Through the tops of the troubled pines,
O stately silent clouds
That gather as day declines !

O lights and shades that weave

Your vernal hillside dance,

O mountain hosts, against the sky

Reclined in solemn trance !

Silence of starry midnight,

Swell of the coming storms !

Ye thousand powers of joy and fear,

In light, in sounds, and forms !

Ye countless Master hands

Which thought and sense surround,

Why do ye strike on the straining chords

That quiver, and cannot sound ?

Why do ye stir the founts of the soul

Till they leap, and heave, and swell ?

And yet can from their troubled depths

Bid no free current well ?

Yet better, so, better to bear

The weight of thoughts untold,

Too deep to reach—too swift and strong

For verbal chains to hold—

Than drain the fount till its worn bed

Can no fresh current send,—

Than measure out the spirit's powers,

Than count, and find an end!

Oct. 6. 1844.

THE KNELL.



I SAT without the pinewood, where a ledge
Of smooth-washed pebbles met its ruddy floor,
The rippled lake lisped softly in the sedge ;
Green lay the hills upon the further shore.

The pigeons made the inner forest thrill,
The April sky above was high and clear,
The cuckoos, on the plain unfrequent still,
Were lavish of their mellow voices, here.

Folded in Nature's soft embrace, I lent
All my lulled being to her dreamy spell ;—
When, like a death-shot through a sleeping tent,
Boomed from between the hills a funeral knell.

I felt the warm air shudder at the blow ;
And all the timid landscape seemed to shrink
Before the burthen of this alien woe,
Which touched in me alone an answering link.

But I, — I saw the drooping pall and plumes,
The Priest bare-headed, in his fluttering vest,
The group of sable mourners 'mid the tombs,
The kerchiefs white to stooping faces prest.

The dark cloud crossed my soul, then ere I knew,
Dispersed, till all was tranquil as before ;
And when that knell returned in season due,
A different meaning to my heart it bore.

No more a Tongue of sorrow, but a Key —
A brazen Key it seemed, whose touch of might
Threw back the bounds of Nature, and made free
My spirit to all space, and depth, and height.

It pierced the still blue fathoms at my feet,
It rent the fleecy screen above my head ;—
The sweetness of the Present still seemed sweet,
But with Infinity was overspread.

Again the ripple in the sedges broke,
The cuckoos sent their mellow echoes round,
And still that knell awoke and re-awoke,
Till all was blended with its solemn sound ;

All hallowed and enriched : and when at last
I watched for the returning stroke in vain,
Across the empty scene a chillness passed ;
My soul fell sighing to her bounds again.

Jan. 1857.

THOUGHTS IN APRIL, 1854.



THE sunshine settles brooding on the fields ;
Full-voiced, full-breasted, flow the southern winds ;
The powers of Spring are up and through the land.

They wake the tender primrose on the bank,
The cowslip nodding on the breezy croft ;
They break the blue eggs in the budding hedge ;
They fill the quivering nostrils of the fawn ;
They set the lambs to race the daisied lea ;
They lead the full-eyed leveret forth to play
On the wild outskirts of the wood, whose depths
Are trembling to the unseen turtle's voice ;
They wake the turtle's voice—they waken love !
They waken life, new strength, rejoicing new !

O more ! they waken, in our human hearts,
Deep instincts, prescience with remembrance
linked :

The holier Future with the holy Past
They blend, and, of that wedded sweetness sown,
The inner Present hath its flowering-time,
As full of wandering fragrance and soft notes
As the green world without.

And this works on, —

These links of joy and loveliness unwind,
While posts the battle-challenge through the lands ;
While, tracked by coiling smoke and foaming surf,
The thunderous ships rush panting to the war,
And nations, sitting by in still suspense,
Wait the first earthquake-shock, whose dying
fall

This age, this order of the ancient world,
Perhaps, shall never know. So much the more,
O gentlest ministers of God, pursue
Your timely office, never needed more !

Ye quickening elements of life and strength,
Re-issuing from rank Autumn's clammy hold,
And iron discipline of Winter's hand,
Tell to the world, in over-growth so lush,
So worn at root, your parable of hope ;
Tell it of health, new virtue, worthier fruit,
Regenerate out of tempest and of pain.
And ye, O tender spirits of delight,
Abroad in earth and air ! take up again
Your yearly echoes out of Eden's bowers,—
Press all your treasures out, in yearly aim
To crown with Eden's dower a few sweet days.
Poor striving Nature's claims again put forth,
Through her six thousand winters unresigned ;
And let those musing souls, that, loving most
Her holy face, the deeper mourn its wounds,
Be free to catch, or dream they catch, a ray
Of that mute promise which on instinct waits,
To see the vision of a Summer's peace,
A Summer's joy—a Summer wide and long

Come up afar between the gates of war,
And spread, as spreads the river in the lake.

And unto simpler hearts, yet not less wise,
A homelier, not less sacred, lesson teach :
Show them the fledgeling sparrow's fearless wing ;
Show them the little swallow's rosy breast
That, after cleaving leagues of ocean-wind,
Against its last year's home reclines at ease ;
Show them, though doubt and danger hang with-
out,

The touch of Blessing on the land at home ;
Show them the meadows, thick with early grass ;
Show them the basking furrow's mellow tilth,
The fair skies smiling o'er the sower's head ;
And say — For ever lives, for ever rules,
The wakeful, heedful, permeating Love,
The unchanged, undying, all-disposing Love ;
Love shapes the beauteous secret end, and works
Though they be hail and thunder, through the
means ;

Say—Though the nations stagger, yet for this
The “cords of man” are slackened not which bind
The single creature to its Father’s breast;
That guardian wings around the single head
Are folded in the battle’s rolling ranks
Closely as when it stooped in peaceful toil,
Or mid the kneeling household bowed in prayer.

April, 1854.

PROPHETIC INSTINCTS.

. Even in our sleep
Our instincts freshen to the subtle dawn.



WHY shouldst thou fret because thou may'st not
keep

The thoughts that flit across the inward Deep, —
Task thy slow tongue to follow on their track,
And bid it, clothed and captive, lead them back?

True, they seem precious as they waver by.
How fair yon shape of silent prophecy!
What tender light yon beckoning image fills,
Caught from the dawn that lies behind the hills!

So be it; joy thou in their news, nor spoil
That still rejoicing with an idle toil:
This is their hour in man, and no grave heart
But in those rosy visions has its part.

Thy ray of witness boots not in a light
Broad as the sheets of noon to willing sight ;
Nor yet thy broken story in a theme
That to our sons an infant's lisp will seem.

Yea, lisplings all, the sweetest, noblest lays,
That kept our hearts in poise for better days,
By peals of hope, or by that lofty sorrow
Whose wail for vanished good foretells its morrow.

Old Sorrow, heritage of long regret,
Drawn from Eve's bosom through her children yet ;
Since, while she marked the eastward flickering
sword,

Or watched amid the thorns her toiling lord,
Her first-born's forehead with her tears was wet.

What countless fibres from the up-torn root,
Bare, wounded, frustrate of the appointed fruit,
Have started since from earth's disfigured breast,
Still upwards stretching in a mute unrest.

But, on a day, a Hand shall pass o'er earth,
Fraught with the early dowries of their birth,
And gather up those tendrils in its palm,
Draw those wild yearnings into one full calm.

O Fount and Crown of every hope that springs ;
Fulness of heavenly and of earthly things !
Our God, our one created archetype,
Sole Fruit of human nature, ever ripe !

Desire of Nations, Brother on the Throne,
Healer and Help, so near, so little known !
O come and rend the clinging veil away,
And show the Face of love, the Hands stretched
out all day !

O show the restless minds for what they yearn,
Crown with fair fact the growing hope ; and turn
Instincts which vaguely through our spirits flow,
To one clear language, which all hearts shall know !

Nov. 24, 1853.

CRESCENTIO.



It was in the heart of night
A wakeful stripling flung his casement wide ;
He met a flood of silver light
That made his fair pale face more fair and pale, —
He met the wings of an impetuous gale,
Warm and strong, and rich with gifts of
June,
Bounding by betwixt the sea and moon.
Through the quivering starry host,
Like a girt traveller, that of nought takes heed,
The moon climbed up the heavens at speed.
The hurrying, gladdening tide,
Against the Castle bastions white,
And down the dim curves of that balmy coast,

Broke its crowned waves, and scattered flakes of
light.

In wind and stars, in moon and ocean,
All was a world of light, and sound, and motion ;
Yet, owning such harmonious law,
And fused to such a perfect whole,
That silence, solemnness, and rest,
Came cradled on its ample breast,
And Pleasure walked abroad with Awe.

A rush of glad surprise

Took young Crescentio's soul.

Awhile in passive joy he hung :

But soon the mighty love that ruled his mind
Broke the bright trance which from itself had
sprung,

And, like the eagle launched upon the wind,
Or swimmer shooting from some jutting height,
The wholeness of its strong desire outflung
Across the busy night.

And she, for whom the impassioned spell was
meant, —

She, sacred mistress of the loftiest souls
That Fame and Memory treasure in their scrolls, —
She, darling of the young and innocent, —
She, reader of the heavenly types to man, —
She, tender nurse of every finer truth,
That, stifled else, had perished on our earth, —
She, radiant with her dower of beauteous youth,
Though not our narrow mortal phase may span
The far-up date of her ethereal birth, —
She would not disallow that spell's constraint,
A pure heart's love, a yearning spirit's plaint ;

But, yielding to the prayer,

Came gliding through the moon-lit air,
In beauty so sublime, yet winning sweet,
That had they seen, the coldest of earth's race,
The dullest clown that ploughs the bleak hill's
face

Had fallen, in high rapture at her feet.

But none beheld her ; only, as she passed,
The lonely sailor felt
A web of tender thought around him cast,
That made his roughened nature sweetly melt ;
Or some little child that, on its bed,
Lay staring at the swift moon overhead,
In fancies such as children's brains pursue,
Started up with wide eyes glittering bright
In very love, and welcome, and delight
Of something sudden in that beauteous night
Which its kindred spirit knew.

And now she hangs, in visible guise,
Before the turret whence Crescentio leant.
So, often, had the vision blessed his eyes ;
Sometimes upon the evening shore,
When he pursued the murmuring, far-out tide
Which seemed to call him after, as it went,
Into an unknown world ;—then would she glide

Across the naked, newly-furrowed floor,
And pace its dusky levels at his side.
Or she had met him when beneath the shade
Of meadow-oaks he rested, or along
The cuckoo-haunted river strayed ;
Or on the heath, when autumn winds were strong,
Watched the dun cloud-racks through a lonely fir ;
Or when he visited the blue lake's edge,
And passed the wild swan brooding in her nest,
Who never at his footstep cared to stir.

Thus often, often, from his tenderest years,
(For, early loved, so early to the boy
His sacred mistress had vouchsafed such joy,)
Thus had they met ; but never till this hour
Did any shadow in his eyes obscure
The flash of passion pure,
Or tame its welcome to a pensive light.
But she, all calm, all happiness, the while,
Stood, raying on him her benignant smile,

The type of tenderest human beauty, crowned
By dignity not human ; shrined around
By moonlight, and a mellower than the moon's.

She spake, and low as was the tone,
Yet, as the sovereign note, at once 'twas known,
That led the chorus of the night,
And, in one soul harmonious bound
Its floating, fitful tunes.

“I come,” she said, “my friend ; but why
Am I thus welcomed with a sigh ?
And wherefore did that stress of woe ,
On thine invocation lie ?

Thus far, to thine unsaddened youth alone,
Have I a ministrant of joy been known ;
But if the waxing years, the deepening mind,
Have led thee to thine heritage of pain, —
Grave heritage that waits on all thy kind,
The seed-time of their final bliss or bane, —
Let me the burthen know ;

For hearts nor faint nor feeble, have confest,
If not a guide, a friend in me, possess
Of seasonable arts to cheer or soothe,
To float the worn-out thoughts to regions smooth,
To bathe in tender hues, or throw
A light sublime upon the woe ;
The parchèd fount of tears again to fill,
Or nerve the spirit with the battle-thrill."

"Yea, what indeed, of loss or ill,
What pang, O heavenly born ! of heart or brain,"
The fervent youth made answer, "but may gain
A medicine from thee ?—save only one.
What waste canst thou not clothe with green ?
what void
May not thy sweet creations fill ?
What ruins of a happiness destroyed
But, touched by thee, show fairer than the prime ?
One sorrow lies beyond thy help alone,
One loss thou may'st not heal—the loss of thee."

“But must this truly be?”

Gently, she answered. “O beloved youth,—

“Dear for thy love of me,

But dearer for thy fervency, thy truth;

Dear for thine instincts sure,

As plants sun-seeking, for the good and pure,—

For thy fair fancy, thy conceptions wide,

And quick emotions! I had hoped, indeed,

Such gifts were with thy destiny allied,

To make thee wholly mine.

The youngest of thy royal father's seed,

From regal duties freed,

Yet lifted far o'er common human need,—

I hoped that leisure waited on thy days,

To rove at will my bowery ways,

And weave, in verse, the treasures of thy mind,

To honour me, and sweetly teach thy kind.”

“And so it is!” he cried, with rapturous voice;

“Those words have sealed me. I am thine!

For what may trespass on thy sacred choice?

Shall the base cares of tax and rate,
The laws of harbour and of mart,
The busy nothings of a petty state ;
Or the dull trammels of a formal troth,
Call back the votary from thy shrine,
And force his soul's true faculties to sloth ?
No, let my father choose among his sons
A busier temper, an unplighted heart,
On him the burgh, the dowered bride bestow, —
Smooth be his life, and honours round it grow !
While mine in solemn service runs
Its holy, dedicated course,
Which no intruding claim shall bend or force."

"Save only Duty's ;" so her soft word fell,
As, while the winds a moment cease to move,
Athwart a crowd of tossing firs
Glide down the silken pinions of a dove ; —
And as, again, the rough winds swell,
Again the tangled forest stirs,

So to his angry plaint did he return.

“ O Duty, chilling name ! O image stern,

Too austere mistress for so frail a race !—

How many a youthful cheek has paled,

How many a tender bosom quailed

Before thy frowning face !

The impassive soul, that plods from day to day

On its set track, may yield thee homage blind ;

The veteran spirits that have worn their way

Through wounds and strivings to the heights of
peace,

Indeed may love thee ;—but how much of pain,

What checks, what blight and frost,

Must meet the passionate heart, the fervent mind,

Before the weary struggle cease

That bows them down submissive to thy reign !

How many a blooming impulse hast thou crost !

Between the inner and the outer life,

How oft thy marring touch has wakened strife ! ”

So vexed Crescentio spoke,
In sorrow half, and half in wrath ;
But she upon the angry murmur broke,
And turned the key to music, bursting forth :—

“ Ó Duty, Duty ! what unthankful tongue
Is this which so miscalls thine office sweet ?
From thee do striving and unfitness spring ?
Fair angel, from whose gleaming feet
The silver cord is still unwound,
That guides through all the mazy tracks of life ;
Whose touch makes music of its noise,
And beauteous order of its coil,
And heavenly service of its toil.

“ Art thou the blight of love and youthful bloom ?
Thou bounteous Tree, whose boughs are hung
With all life's gladdening charities :
By thee the lover's joys are sealed ;

'Thou lead'st the mother to the cradle side,
And makest of her deep unspoken joys

A consecrated tide.

Thine honoured seat on the domestic hearth
Sheds Love, and Mirth, and Plenty round.

“Art thou the bane of high emprise,
Parent and Nurse of Fame?

'Tis thou that glorifiest the patriot's name ;

'Tis thou that sanctifiest the battle-field ;

The trumpet-blast for thee that rings

Echoes can from Heaven awake ;

The bays thou twinest round the warrior's shield,

The wreath thou weavest for the sage's brows,

Are verdant in the tomb.

“O Duty ! many-branchèd River,

'That dost thy countless tributes lead,

Gliding on in ever-gathering train,

Before the feet of the all-bounteous Giver !

O Duty ! noiseless sacrifice of souls,
That, like the steaming of the fragrant mead,
Breathest thine upward incense !—sacred Chain !
Knitting this yearning planet as she rolls
Her lowly orbit round the starry tiers,

To the Unimagined, Ruling Shrine ;—
Chain on whose links in lightning current dart

The missions of the Will Divine,
And the consenting answers of man's heart.
O filial Privilege on life bestowed,
That faintly by its lowest tribes confest
Dost widen with its rising spheres,
And bind'st most closely to the Father's breast,

His children of sublimest race !

Yea, thou with sweet control dost trace
The order of eternal joys, and crown

The raptures of the blest !

And O, my Guide, my Guardian, what were I—
I that now sweeten angels' tongues, and keep
The oracles of God for man enshrined,—

O, what without thee, but a wandering light,
A fitful meteor, leading mortals down
The slopes of lawless Fancy, or the steep
Of headlong passion into utter night !”

So spake the lovely Being, and inclined,
In silent adoration, her meek head,
While sweetness gathered on the exulting wind,
The full seas panted, flashed the stars, the moon
Stood brightening. “Hark ! O hark !” she cried,
Lifting her rapturous face, her gleaming arm,
“Nature, whose childlike ministers obey
In duteous harmony that placid sway,
Attest its praise !” Then they together stood,
That youth and his celestial mistress, each
Suspended in the solemn charm,
And drinking deep, with kindred souls, the flood
Of rich emotion ; but too soon
The light upon Crescentio’s features died,
And in despondent tones he sighed.

“I, too, this language can discern, and reach
These mystic raptures where thou lead’st the way.
I, too, can love the august, the beauteous Truth
By thee unveiled; but shouldst thou guide no
more,
Then all that deepened, raised, inspired my youth,
Falls powerless in the dust. Disowned by thee,
My aimless life shall languish like a tree
When the clear sap is dwindling at its core,
And inch by inch the useless boughs decay.”

“Ah! cease,” she cried, with cheerful tone,
“To do thy better self this wrong:
Say not the colouring of my touch alone
Makes truth and duty lovely in thine eyes;
I will not think so base a thing of thee.
Too well, from childhood, like the golden sands
Paving the fountain clear,
The precious grains of Virtue, Courage, Truth,
Beneath the playing of thy Fancy free

My watchful eye has known.

Go, then, and from thy father's honoured hand—

Nor with cold arms, nor backward heart, receive

The destined Partner of thy life,

And mount the delegated throne ;

Fearless though this new career

Seems with thy native gifts at strife ;

—Unto an honest heart, the life

Will teach the fitness for itself.

While not one lovely vision that has swelled

Thy bosom in the thoughtful Past,

One moonlit vigil at this window held,

One hour of mystic converse by my side,

On mountain sward or rocky shelf,

But has upon thy spiritual Future cast

Its fertilising grain.

Look on Mother-Nature's thrifeful plan ;

Nor loss, nor waste, she knows ; and even Decay

Gives back its fragments to the stores

Where life, and form, and colour lurk

In still progression, waiting for their day.

So, nought to the wise-hearted man,
Of seeming good or ill that ever crost

The orbit of his life, is lost :

All has its portion in the gradual work
That builds his soul to its predestined scope
Of Goodness, Wisdom, and of final Bliss.

“O, may thine arise

To utmost growth, and under smiling skies!

While haply, ere the eternal Morning greet

Its summit glorified, thou yet may'st meet

Me, the beloved of thy youth, again.

Thus has it fared with others who have loved,

And seemed for ever from my side removed.

But for this hour, and best most briefly said,

“One word remains. Farewell.”

So saying, she stooped down her gracious head

And sealed his forehead with a kiss.

Thereat no sudden flush
Over his languid features came,
Nor did thrill of passion rush
Through the pulses of his frame.
Fever had sunk, and passion had grown tame,
Beneath the discipline of her calm words.
Only it seemed that deep within his soul
Some curtain was half-lifted, and there stole
Some sweet forecasting sense across his mind,
As through the mountain mist a fanning wind ;
Or, as a traveller, toiling on his way
O'er barren roads, descries on either side
Cool opening glades of turf,
Opening tracts of flowery lawn,
Whence come the luscious notes of hidden birds,
And knows not when, but feels that on a day
It shall be his those pleasures to explore.

* * * * *

He raised his eyes, and he beheld
Only the dusky sea and dim-red dawn.

One heavy surge of grief
Across his bosom swelled ;
Then he drew forth, and leaf by leaf,
Flung, with slow hand, upon the surf
Those pages, hoarded long, and often conned,
Where his young hand with aspirations fond
Had stored the rhymèd treasures, day by day,
From his teeming fancy drawn.

“ Now bid farewell, my soul,” he cried,
“ To thy dear native clime and pastimes sweet ;
Cast all thy flowers at Duty’s feet,
And welcome Winter with this breaking day.”

He knew not that his worshipped Queen the while
Hovered at hand, and watched with kindly smile
This frowardness of young resolve.
Yet did she stretch no timely hand to save
The fragments from the reckless wave ;
A worthier harvest than this early fruit

She knew a mellow age would yield ;
Or better else his soul should learn to train
 Some other way its vigorous shoots, —
With full-ripe boughs endow another field.
Still should some fitting instrument remain
 (For never shall this earth revolve
 Without a living Poet on her breast,)
By Gifts and Destiny together sealed,
 Through his own day, to bear along
The sacred burthen and the trust of song.

Dec. 2. 1855.

A QUESTION FOR THE NIGHT.



IF on some quiet night I lay
Upon my bed, as now I lie,
And watched the full moon hold her way
Across the silence of the sky,
With pace so gradual that she seemed
To rule unstirring in her height,
While underneath the river gleamed,
And all the landscape slept in light ;—
If, on a sudden, I should see
A wanness strike along her face,
Should see her, like a storm-vexed tree,
Bow, rock, and stagger in her place ; .
Then to a deep blood-crimson flush,
And, looming larger as she came,

Down from the cleaving zenith rush,
A darkening mass, streaked through with
flame,
While roaring—not of wind—drew nigh ;—
Then should I to my pillow turn,
And in a prostrate terror lie ?
Or should I, rising up, discern
The instinct of a ransomed soul,
A kindling love that mastered fear,
And watch, behind Heaven's curling scroll,
To see my Saviour's face appear ?

April 13. 1854.

THE END.

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